








CAPTAIN
JOHN B. DENTON



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CAPTAIN JOHN B. DENTON

PREACHER, LAWYER,
AND SOLDIER

HIS LIFE AND TIMES
IN
TENNESSEE, ARKANSAS, AND TEXAS

BY
WM. ALLEN



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TO OLD COMRADE PIONEERS OF DENTON COUNTY
WHO FEEL NEAREST;
AND TO ALL PIONEER SETTLERS OF TEXAS,
THESE FOND MEMORIES
ARE MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

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A Word to the Public

The life of Captain John B. Denton as herein contained is a true picture of the man and his times. All fiction has been carefully avoided. It was a temptation, and it would have been both pleasing and easy to the author to have interwoven fascinating pictures of fiction, but this would not have been just and true to the pioneer settlers, who desire nothing but the truth. They want the simple truth told of an old companion who spent his life on the outskirts of civilization. But even the truth spoken in its simple strain is sometimes stranger than fiction.

Captain Denton is only one man in the list of many pioneers in Texas who wrought well for mankind. And while people are brought under obligations to such men, they must not suppose that these actors bore their tasks grievously. Very far from it! It was their choice and pleasure. God had made them so, and tempered them with endurance and courage to meet frontier and dangerous conditions bravely.

Touching the life and character of Denton, it must be stated that he was a wonderful man. No one, perhaps, has had better opportunity of conceiving him in his true character and value to humanity than his biographer. Seldom has a man acted before the public in whom so many good points met, or one of such varied qualification. Called by the conditions of the times to act different parts in the drama of his life, he failed in none, was equally strong in all.

Although almost three-quarters of a century have passed since his death, he still stands before the Texas public as an unwithered tree, and still bears the fruits of his life. The biographer, though having to wade through some difficulties in order to a faithful and true delineation, humbly hopes that this fresh resuscitation of fond memories will prove a blessing to mankind as well as helpful to Texas history.

The Task of the Biographer

The task of writing the biography of John B. Denton was undertaken cheerfully notwithstanding the many difficulties embarrassing the happy pursuit. There is such a lack of freshness in the knowledge of things appertaining to the life and character of this notable man that, at this late day, he suggests himself to the mind more as a subject of romance than as an ideal character who was once a preacher, an attorney, and a soldier among the people. Now almost three-quarters of a century have gone since he was on the stage of action.

When it is considered that in the age and in the country in which he lived, men were chiefly valuable as actors and for the services they rendered, there was little thought of preserving their biographies on written pages. Indeed, all those days were days of excitement and action, and there were no ready scribes. Hence there remains only a modicum of written data upon which to construct true biography; yet, on the other hand, quite an amount of recollections

held traditionally. Even in this the worthiness of the man is shown; for it may be truthfully spoken that when a man, in the absence of written history, lives long and fondly in the memory of the people, he wrote himself, by his deeds, deeply in the thought and heart of his cotemporaries. In this way Captain Denton's name became a household word. Even little children, climbing on the father's knee, listen in silence to the tales of the father when he tells to them the story of some unwritten hero.

Thus it may be spoken of John B. Denton; for there are immortalities among men. They will long live in the memory of the people despite the negligence of scribes. Yet there is danger in a too long neglected written history; for time gathers its fables and is disposed to weave them in the web of true history. However much the seasons and conditions of country may force a period of written neglect of the immortalities among men, yet they will not fade from human memory. They are the usefully talented who adapt themselves to the conditions of their day and country, and meet all emergencies heroically, without looking too freely upon their own personal safety and profit.

They seem born unto a purpose, and that purpose is manifested in their lives of self-sacrifice, self-forgetfulness, and their labors of common defense and general welfare.

A child of destiny is not like other people. He has marks of his own, like one tossed in his own tutions and perceptions. Scarcely ever is he seen like one mathematically studying and weighing the points of advantage and disadvantage in the common problem of a human life. He is more like one patiently waiting opportunity, *his opportunity*. If he never meets with his opportunity he passes out of life as any other common man, unsung and soon forgotten. If the times are propitious and his opportunity arrives, he sees it, embraces it, is overwhelmed with it, and pursues it until he has subjected it unto the common good.

In looking over the career of Denton's life, brief as it was, the idea of destiny is hard to escape. In the very beginning the lots all seemed to be unfavorable. The common observer of the times, had he been allowed to exercise judgment on the boy while growing up and forming his character under the hardest conditions, would have said that nothing good can

ever come from beneath those tangled locks. But the human judgment is no more perfect to-day than it was in the day that David was chosen King over Israel. Were it not for imperfection in human judgment, the unexpected would not so often happen. Beneath the tangled locks of Denton, in his boyhood, there was hidden an intellectual grandeur and probity of soul that qualified him for a high plain of action and usefulness. Not restless, but contented, he waited patiently through the years of his youth for the days of his opportunity.

All beautiful flowers have not been seen of men. And how often has no human hand dug away the weeds where struggling beauty was hidden. Monumental beauty lies hidden in the stone quarries of the mountain, and other things lovely in the entangled forest, just as often there lie things of beauty and utility beneath the entangled locks of the struggling, climbing boy. All these need help, and when the helping hand is given, the things of beauty are awakened into life, and man beholds in admiration. Even without help, here and there things of beauty sometimes appear.

The world's history has never in half part

been written, nor will the world ever know that which might have been. It will never know the beauty of many a flower that perished unblown for want of a helping hand. Much of the world's history that has been written had as well have been unsaid, when measured by the good that has come of it. There has been many a worthy biography, containing much that is good and worthy of remembrance, that has been crowded out to give room for things less valuable to God and country.

The history of the worthy man who now stands out before us was threatened to suffer a similar fate. This would have been loss and unfortunate not only locally to Denton County, but to Arkansas and Texas. He is closely associated with both these states in the days of their trials and struggles, but especially with Texas. He is a part of Texas history. It is easily perceived that the time might come when a stranger would ask why have you so much of the Denton name in Texas—Denton County, Denton Creek, Denton City, and Denton College—and an intelligent historical answer could not be given. Hence the importance of personal history, that the reading descendants of the acting sires may

be able to give intelligent answers to the inquiries of the traveling stranger. Hence, now, while it is not too late, the pioneers have resolved that something shall be written to perpetuate the memory of one of their chiefest and noblest compatriots, and at the same time preserve in history the life and times of that period. It is but just to humanity and the state of Texas.

Captain John B. Denton and his compatriots lived in a day of action, and under circumstances when history was not written; it is well illustrated by the Israelites in the day when they were acting and not writing their history:

“And Joshua said, take you up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of Israel: that this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask your fathers in time to come, saying, what mean you by these stones, then ye shall answer them that the waters of Jordan were cut off before the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, when it passed over Jordan; the waters of Jordan were cut off; and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel forever.”

Search for the Lost Remains of Captain John B. Denton

While the pioneer settlers of Denton County were assembled in their annual association in the month of August, A. D. 1900, their thought providentially turned to their county and county-seat, both bearing the same name, DENTON. It bore their thoughts along the scenes of former pioneer days to things written in history; and also to things held in memory, but which by the condition of the times had never been written. They believed that inasmuch as Texas had made a great history, her history should be preserved for the happiness, comfort, and instruction of the coming generations.

Feeling the pride natural with all men when their county and town are fair to look upon, and a good heritage to themselves, it was but natural that their thoughts should turn to the source of the name. Of course, they were all acquainted with the name of Captain John B. Denton, though none of them had ever seen him. The

deeds of his life had made his name a household word with them, and with the people variously over Texas, and with many beyond. While there was not much written data he was, nevertheless, held in abundant memory through the teachings of the fathers to their children. Among the things that provoked deep interest in the pioneer session was the strong traditional evidence that the remains of Captain Denton lay buried somewhere in Denton County, and that there were living witnesses who could give testimony.

It is not necessary here to further state the deliberations of the pioneers at this session, further than to say that they were unanimous in the opinion that something should be done; that certain neglected honors were due to Captain Denton, and that they were without excuse for further neglecting these honors, unless something should appear that would make it impossible. That under the circumstances, it was both honorable and right that they should go forward and find all that was possible to know.

Hence William Allen, a member of the pioneer association, was appointed to gather all the data possible touching the place of Denton's burial,

together with all facts yet possible to be known of his character and the deeds of his life, and to report all discoveries to a future session of the pioneer settlers of Denton County.

The resolution making this appointment was not on the ground that Captain Denton was or ever had been a citizen of Denton County, because that was impossible, for Denton County was not constituted until some years after he had been killed in battle with the Indians; nor was it because Denton lay buried somewhere in the territory of Denton County; but because he was a lover of humanity, a patriot in the broad meaning of that word, intelligent, courageous, and a man of great probity; because he was so regarded in the wisdom of the state, which did him the honor of giving his name to a division of its territory; because in the days of trials, hardships, and sacrifice he had endured much, and done much in laying the foundation of this great state.

Mr. Allen had quite a great but pleasant task imposed upon him by the resolution of the pioneer settlers, but he seemed to appreciate the obligations and importance of the whole matter, and turned to the task in full conscious-

ness of a great duty. Yet it was like looking down into the hidden buds awaiting the weather of spring, and whispering down into their sleeping-places and telling them to awake and adorn the earth with their beauty and loveliness. So it was the task of awakening to life again hidden things of virtue and probity, that were illustrated in the life and character of Captain Denton.

Without delay, notice was given through the newspapers of the will, desire, and action of the pioneers of Denton County; and through personal correspondence with many, calling upon all to give such information as they could of the burial-place, life, and character of Captain Denton; and among other things to find and report whether there was a likeness of him in existence, or whether he ever sat to have his picture taken.

The call provoked various interest over the state and elsewhere. It indicated, even at this late day, that while but little had ever been written, Captain Denton was largely known, and that his name and the deeds of his life were being handed down by the fathers unto their children.

In the way of personal correspondence and newspaper reports, quite an amount of matter soon accumulated in the hands of Mr. Allen, touching on the life and character of Captain Denton, descriptive of his physical contour, complexion, color of hair and eyes, height, and indeed so much bearing on his physical form and mien, that in the absence of a portrait, one could be made largely representative of the man. Much was gathered relating to his art as an orator, to his ministerial gift, to his ability as a lawyer, to his courage, and to his utility as a citizen in the days when men's hearts were tried, and as a soldier against the Indians.

But the general public seemed to be struck deeper with a sense of Captain Denton's lost remains than with anything else. It is human nature to be more or less shocked with the thought of lost remains. However much we may be educated to believe that the material body is not the real man, nevertheless we will remember that it is the part that has been seen by us, that has been talked through, smiled through, loved through, and acted through; and with such acquaintance we are loath to hide it away, and are troubled when it is lost.

On this account, whether for reason or against reason, we mourn the loss of the body of any dear one, and must have it in order to be satisfied. Though we may not be able to preserve it and keep it in sight, yet we are not content unless we know the spot where it is put away; a spot where may be planted a rose, an evergreen, or something showing respectful memory; a spot to which we can go in dedication service and spread the flowers of our love.

It was this holy human nature that wrought up such anxiety that the body of Captain Denton should be produced, if possible. In human sense there is a disposition for less hesitation when the body is present. There is a coldness in paying the obsequies due when the body is absent or cannot be found. It becomes a part of us. Though cold and motionless, we want its presence in our action, even as it was present in action when living. Without it, inspiration is, in part, lost. Hence, in the first instance, the people wanted to know where Captain Denton's body was. Could his grave be found? Could his remains be produced?

Hence, in this biographical record we deem it a duty in the first instance to satisfy the public sense

by placing Captain Denton as largely before the eyes as possible, by giving the evidence showing that the body or lost remains have been found, and that, after so long a time, he has received the honorable, civilized, and Christian burial that has been justly due him for all these years, but which has been forbidden by the times and the condition of the country. His remains now lie sleeping in a corner of the court-house yard in the city of Denton.

But in looking over the evidence, we have been put to the necessity of studiously extracting the truth out of the half-way chaotic bundle of matter that came under the eye of the writer of this biography. Those who, as it seems, had an opportunity to be agreed were not, some contending that Captain Denton was first buried in the territory of what is now Tarrant County; others that he was buried in the territory of what is now Denton County. These differing reports came from the two or three who yet survive of the Kechi battle, in which Denton was killed, and from others with whom the old pioneers had talked. These not being in harmony, it became necessary to identify Captain Denton's body on another line of evidence.

It was agreed that at some former time one of his arms had been broken, that he had certain teeth with gold fillings, and that, in his first burial, there was a certain arrangement of stones about his grave, and certain other significations which, when put together, form an incontestable proof. Now, it matters not where the remains should be found, whether in Denton County or Tarrant County or elsewhere, the evidence would show that the body is Denton's.

So far as is known there are but two men living now who were in the battle in which Captain Denton was killed. One of these is Rev. Andrew Davis, of Waxahachie, who was a frontier boy at the time, and a soldier of about thirteen years of age. The other is Colonel Sam Sims, of Rich Hill, Missouri. Mr. Davis seemed very positive that he could find the lonesome spot where Denton was buried. Mr. Davis, being old, never went in search of the grave. In this connection it is proper to state that Captain Henry Stout in his lifetime, was equally sure, but, after searching in company with others, was unable to find it.

It must be allowed that time works changes

in human memory which a witness cannot recognize, and that advancing civilization itself puts such changes on the face of a country that all things appear new and strange. Experience teaches that, under the changes wrought by time and human art, instead of finding the lost things sought for, we rather lose ourselves in the midst of the confusion.

Dr. J. N. Denton, in company with Colonel James Bourland, who was in the Kechi battle and helped to bury Denton, went in search of his father's grave in 1859. Bourland, like others, thought he could find it. This was only eighteen years after the Kechi battle and burial of Denton. Considering that Bourland was the expert frontiersman that he was, it did seem that his chance to find the grave was the best of all men, and especially so when it was only eighteen years after Denton's burial. Yet Dr. J. N. Denton in a published letter says: "Suffice to say the search was a failure, and Colonel Bourland, after two days' labor, in the endeavor to find the grave, confessed, to his chagrin and disappointment, his inability to find it."

It may not be improper here to state that, in discovering the place of Denton's first inter-

ment, it was more accidental than otherwise. Rev. John L. Lovejoy, who was with Denton when he was killed, who saw him laid to rest the day after the battle, who sold goods in Alton, the first county-seat of Denton County, and who afterwards lived in the town of Denton until the day of his death, though all this time not more than twenty miles away from the place where Denton's body rested, did not know the spot. It all looks strange. From it we all should be impressed, and learn the lesson taught in the fable of Irving's Rip Van Winkle. Men may not sleep, as Van Winkle is reported to have done, yet absenting themselves for twenty years or more, and then returning again, they see all things have changed, and show up in new design and with new face. They are simply lost in the things of memory.

Here we introduce the evidence showing the spots, and settling the question of Captain Denton's first, second, and third burials, and the evidence that led to the identity of his body. But it must also be stated that the accidental or providential is related to the discovery of his first grave. John S. Chisum was the first large cattleman of Denton County. He was raised

in Clarksville, the home of his father and Captain Denton. His father, Clabe Chisum, was with Denton in the Kechi battle. He saw Denton buried, and being his fellow-townsmen and good friend, he was as close observer as any. He felt the responsibility of reporting to the unfortunate widow the circumstances of her husband's burial and the manner in which he was put away; and, as is natural, prepared himself as a friend to accurately answer her many questions. The death and lonesome burial of Denton was the town talk. The chief citizen was gone. Clarksville was his home, the circle of his intimate and dearest friends. John S. Chisum grew to manhood in the knowledge of all these things.

The world knows that a boy of amiable size is the best listener to the tales of the fathers. Such was John S. Chisum. His father having been with Denton in battle and a participator in the lonely burial, the telling it to the family was, to the listening boy, like one of those enchanting tales of which all boys are so fond. When tales of this kind are once told, it is a heart lesson, grounded and rooted in the memory of the boy, never to be forgotten. And that

which makes it doubly impressive on the boy is that his father was a companion in it all. The lad loved the man his father loved, and when he became a man he was, perhaps, most interested over the lost remains of his father's faithful friend.

Such is the witness we here introduce. His herdsmen (cowboys) told him that they had found a grave, and described the plat of ground and the signs about it. The description was so representative of what he had heard his father relate, that he at once believed it to be the grave of his father's friend, the long-lost John B. Denton.

In answer to inquiries of John W. Gober of Denton, who was an old pioneer of Denton County, John S. Chisum, from Roswell, New Mexico, wrote him a letter, containing the following. The letter was dated July 4, 1880:

"The remains of John B. Denton are buried at the Waide place, in a small box, six or eight feet from the house I lived in, rather at the southwest corner. From the description James Bourland, W. C. Young, and Henry Stout had given me of the place where he was buried, I knew that was his grave. And being a friend

of Denton's, I took up his remains and carried them home. From many circumstances I can say that I am positive that I am not mistaken of their being the remains of Captain Denton, but I know they are his, and no mistake."

Additional Testimony

We now append additional testimony, as published in the Dallas News, together with the report of William Allen, who was appointed by the Pioneer Association of Denton County, to look up the history of Captain Denton and the place of his burial.

Testimony of Robert G. Johnson

[Special to the News]

DENTON, TEX., Oct. 30.

Robert G. Johnson of Bolivar, probably the only person now living who was with the late John S. Chisum when he disinterred the bones supposed to be those of Colonel John B. Denton, has prepared a statement of the facts of the disinterment and the circumstances connected therewith. It is believed that his statement will be conclusive evidence, when brought before the committee of the Old Settlers' Association, which will take steps thereupon for exhuming the remains near Bolivar. The statement follows:

"I was working for John S. Chisum in 1860. About August of that year (1860) Mr. Chisum, who knew the location of a grave on the north bank of Oliver Creek, some distance from the water, but still in the creek bottom, took with him James R. Bourland, who was at that time selling goods at Bourland's Bend, on Red River, and Felix McKittrick, and they identified the grave as that of John B. Denton, to the satisfaction of Mr. Chisum. Soon after this we were hunting cattle in the neighborhood of the grave, and at Mr. Chisum's order took up the bones. Our party at the time consisted of John S. Chisum, Christopher Fitzgerald, an old man whose pick was used while we raked the dirt away with our hands, Reese Hanna, Newt Anderson, Patrick O'Ferrell, and myself, and also two negroes, Phil and Jiles Chisum. We found the imprint of the blanket in which Denton was buried still showing in the soil below the remains. We found all the bones except the last bone of one finger. We found one tooth which was plugged with gold, which we thought further confirmed the identity of the remains. We also noticed that one of the bones of the arm had been broken and healed. So far as I know, no one of the

party named ever had a reasonable doubt about the bones being those of John B. Denton. The bones were afterward reburied in a sperm-candle box in the yard at Mr. Chisum's home near where the town of Bolivar now stands.

(Signed)

"R. G. JOHNSON."

The James R. Bourland mentioned by Mr. Johnson was one of the soldiers present when Colonel Denton was killed, and as the time of the killing was a time of recent date, it would seem that if any one could find the grave it would certainly be he. He identified both the grave and the remains as that of Denton, whom he had well known, and the opinion here seems to be that there is no doubt that the remains interred in the yard of the Waide place, near Bolivar, are those of Denton.

**Testimony of
Captain Robert W. Hopkins, Sr.**

[Special to the News]

DENTON, TEX., Sept. 26.

The controversy over the burial-place of Colonel John B. Denton, for whom this county was named, is attracting a good deal of attention

not only here, but in other portions of the state, and a number of letters have been received anent the matter. Captain Robert H. Hopkins, Sr., of this city, gave his version of the affair, which he had from several survivors of the company of which Denton was captain, as follows, to the News correspondent to-day.

“All accounts agree that Colonel Denton was killed on Village Creek, in Tarrant County, east of where is now Ft. Worth. Uncle Johnny Lovejoy, who was with Denton at the time he was killed, and who lived in this county up to his death, often has told me the entire story. Clabe Chisum, the father of John S. Chisum, was also with Denton when he was killed, and to his son John told, as near as he could, the exact location of the grave, which he thought was somewhere on Denton Creek, also named for Denton. John Chisum came to Denton County in 1854, not 1855, as Colonel John Peter Smith of Ft. Worth states, and after he had roamed all over Denton County with his herds, at last came upon the place which, from the description given him by his father, he believed to be the burial-place. An elm-tree near by had been marked, according to his father’s

statement, and such marks as described on an elm-tree he found on Oliver Creek, near its mouth on Denton Creek. John Lovejoy told him that if he found the body, he would find that certain teeth had been filled, and when he had dug open the grave the body was found just as his father had stated. The filled teeth were also found, as described by Uncle Johnny Lovejoy, and to make the identification more complete, a blanket exactly like that in which he had been interred was discovered wrapped around the bones. A tin cup, trinkets, and other articles known to have been buried with him were also found in the grave, making the identification certain. Chisum took up the remains and carried them in a box to his home, near Bolivar, on Clear Creek, northwest of this city. He kept them in this box for several years, and they were still there when he sold the place to Mr. Waide. The bones began to get musty and damp and in the way, however, and Waide took them out and buried them, still in the old box, in one corner of the yard. The Waides have lived on the old place ever since; Jim Waide, a son, is still there; and if the body has ever been disinterred and buried elsewhere,

none of them has ever known of it. In my mind there is no doubt that the remains are still where Waide buried them."

Report of Hon. William Allen

[Special to the News]

DENTON, TEX., Oct. 19.

Anent the life and history of Colonel John B. Denton, about which there has been so much controversy lately, the following report of the Old Settlers' Committee, Rev. William Allen, appointed to investigate the matter, will be of interest. At a considerable trouble, Rev. Mr. Allen has been able to secure a fairly complete history of Colonel Denton's life. The report follows:

To the Executive Committee of Denton County Pioneers: When I, as your committee, advertised to know 1. The spot where John B. Denton lies buried; 2. Whether there is anywhere a portrait of him; 3. His nativity, when born, color of hair and eyes, complexion, etc.; 4. Every scrap of history that can be gathered of his life and character—I soon saw that the advertisement provoked not only large personal correspondence, but also much newspaper comment. Since so much has been published, it

may seem to some that it is hardly necessary that your committee should make a report. But since the public statements are not in full harmony, it seems best to us to make a report in order to digest and systematize, as much as possible, the whole matter, and to add to it such discoveries as we have made and which are yet unpublished.

The press reports, and the most of that which has been published, appertain to the place of interment and the remains of the noted pioneer, whom we all propose to honor and keep in perpetual memory. But I, as your committee, considered it as much my duty to look after the life, history, character, citizenship, and importance of John B. Denton to society, as to go in search of his grave and remains. Every aspect of the case seemed a duty to us, and whatever may be regarded as a failure on our part, we at least feel that we have been diligent in the search. Therefore, we shall endeavor to make a report as orderly as possible, and as follows:

John B. Denton was born in Tennessee, in 1807. Both his parents died when he was quite young. His mother died when he was an infant. He came to Arkansas at eight years of

age, as is probable, with a family named Wells. Because the family who had charge of him made his life unpleasant, he revolted at twelve years of age, left them, and set up for himself. Beginning life independently and in penury at this early age, it may be easily discerned that his chief facilities for education consisted in observation and experience. Especially may this be perceived when we note that seventeen years afterward Arkansas was admitted as a state into the Union with only seventy thousand population. Hence, in the wild territory of Arkansas, under disadvantages of unfavorable environments, Denton grew to manhood with little or no knowledge of books, but with the keenest wit that comes of observation, privation, and experience. He was happily married when not more than twenty years of age. Soon afterward he made a profession of religion, and joined the Methodist Episcopal Church. He awoke then as from a deep sleep. He bent his great energy in the direction of knowledge. His wife gave him some of his first lessons in books. His deep genius exerted itself, and he rose up as if by magic to be fairly educated. In a very few years he be-

came perhaps the most noted orator of Arkansas and southern Missouri. He became a preacher not long after his conversion, and it was in this field of action that he first exhibited his genius and displayed his oratory.

He came to Texas in 1837, and not long afterward he was, professionally, a lawyer. Yet he continued to preach. He preached in the Dugan residence, in Grayson County, in 1839. He lived in Clarksville. He chose the law as a business measure to maintain his growing family, because in the wild western country ministers very seldom received a sufficiency for family support. Denton was successful as a lawyer. He stood in the front rank as a lawyer and among men, and as an orator was in demand on all occasions. His name was favorably mentioned for high office, and, had he lived, would doubtless have been called to high duties in the republic.

John B. Denton was five feet ten inches high, very erect; had black, slightly curly hair, a broad, high forehead; weighed one hundred and sixty pounds, of impressive mien, and bore himself in a way that denoted great energy. There is no portrait of him in existence. He

was an actor, not a caterer, and would, therefore, have been hard to catch by an artist. It was also nearly as late as his death that Daguerre discovered the first cheap mode of taking pictures, and the art, up to that time, had not been introduced in the West. Since no portrait can be found, it precludes both the engraved image or statue form on a monument. Yet it is no bar against building a monument to his memory.

Denton was thirty-four years old when he was killed. He was killed in the pursuit of Indians just after their defeat at Kechi village, in Tarrant County. He was shot in the breast. He fell on the twenty-second day of May, 1841. Colonel E. H. Tarrant was a military officer of the republic of Texas at that time, and was assigned to duty on the northern border. He was in the battle in which Denton was killed, and was, therefore, first in command; that is, he was the general in command of the battle. Yet Denton was in command of men. Just how, or what relation, is hard at this late day to know. He was the Marshal Ney of the occasion.

Denton's body was carried northward into Denton County and buried. We say buried in

Denton County—by this we mean he was buried in territory that was afterward named Denton County. There was no Denton County until 1846, and no Tarrant County until 1849. No settlement was made in either of these counties until twelve or more years after the Kechi fight and death of Denton. The territory of both these counties was a vast wilderness and untraversed except in pursuit of Indians. Denton's grave was, therefore, lost.

The question now rises: Has the lost grave ever been found? We are inclined to believe that if it has never been found, that it never will be. It is not your committee's office to declare anything but evidence. It is claimed that the lost grave has been found, and that the mortal remains of John B. Denton now lie buried on the old John Chisum ranch in Denton County. The evidence in support of this claim is that Clabe Chisum, John's father, was one of the party that buried Denton, and had often described the character of the grave to his son John and others. The testimony is that the grave was found, as described, together with certain things that were buried with the body. Since it was stated that the remains showed that

an arm had been broken, I thought it right, as your committee to find out if John B. Denton ever had such an accident. Rev. J. F. Denton, the eldest son, and who was twelve years old at the time of his father's death, says that his father once had an arm broken by a fall from a horse. This seemed to me to be good corroborating evidence. That same son writes me that from all he has heard and from all the evidence gathered, he believes that the remains buried on the Chisum ranch are those of his father.

I leave this matter to the judgment of the executive committee, and to all pioneers. There is other evidence supporting this identity of Denton's body. For this I refer the executive committee and others to John W. Gober, Judge I. D. Ferguson, and James Chisum, and others, and to all that has been published in support of this identity. It should all be duly considered.

John B. Denton was the father of six children, four sons and two daughters. Only three sons are now living. These are: Rev. J. F. Denton of Weatherford, who was twelve years old at the time of his father's death; Dr. A. N. Denton of Austin, who was four years old; and

Rev. John B. Denton, Jr., who was an infant at the time of his father's death. Quite a number of his descendants have been, or are, teachers of standing and influence.

J. W. Wilbarger, in his book *Indian Depredations in Texas*, after speaking of Denton's coming to Texas, settlement in Clarksville, his sermon at the Dugan home, his law practice, his oratory, and his tragic death, says: "So perished one of Texas' brainiest and best pioneers. A fine orator, far above the average in intelligence, and, had he lived, would have proved a blessing to his country, and assisted materially in its advancement."

Thrall's history of Texas, being a compendium rather than a general history, merely mentions Denton's name and death in connection with the naming of Denton County. He also mentions his name in a brief sketch of Col. E. H. Tarrant, stating that he was in the battle in which Denton was killed.

Dr. Thrall, in his history of Texas Methodism, speaks most commendably of Denton in every sense.

In conclusion, I will say that the more I have looked into the life and character of this great

and good pioneer, the more I am impressed with the importance of his life, and therefore hold that it is both reasonable and right that a monument should be constructed to his memory.

There are two men living who were with Denton when he was killed, Rev. Andrew Davis of Waxahachie, and Colonel Sam Sims, now eighty-three years of age. Colonel Sims is living with his daughter, Mrs. W. H. Allen, at Rich Hill, Mo. My information concerning Colonel Sims is obtained by correspondence with Mrs. S. J. Wilson of Clarksville, Texas. She knew Denton in his Texas life. She was also a student in school with John Chisum in 1840, the school taught by Bernard Hill, who became a son-in-law of Denton's. Colonel Sims is Mrs. Wilson's uncle.

I have made this report as brief as possible. It is a mere compendium of facts, all of which can be easily established by the testimony I have in hand. Very respectfully submitted,

WM. ALLEN,

Your Committee.

Much could be added to this testimony supporting the truth that the grave of Captain

Denton was found, and that his remains were taken up and preserved. Surely enough has been stated to remove all doubt, should any exist anywhere. The pioneer settlers are all convinced, agreed, and satisfied. They constituted the jury that sat in the case, and unanimously have rendered their verdict that the remains buried on the Chisum ranch are all that is left to us, in a material way, of the noted pioneer, Captain John B. Denton.

It only remained now that the remains be exhumed, brought to Denton, and prepared for burial in the court-house yard. Unto this end the Pioneer Association appointed the following named members to do this work, viz., John W. Gober, R. H. Hopkins, C. C. Dougherty, and R. H. Bates.

The committee did its work well. All that follows now, relating to the funeral and burial services, is taken from the published account in the Record and Chronicle of Denton.

Report of Record and Chronicle

The movement, begun more than a year ago by the Old Settlers' Association of Denton County, to locate the remains of Captain John

B. Denton, pioneer and border hero, for whom this county and city were named, and, if found, to give them a public burial, culminated last Thursday afternoon, when his bones were given their last interment, publicly, and with befitting ceremonies. Captain Denton surrendered his life in a public cause, the defense of the border from the ravages of the Indians. And it was singularly appropriate that his new grave is in public soil, the southeast corner of the court-house yard. Another appropriate feature of the final ceremonies was the presence of the faculty and students of the John B. Denton College, an institution named in his memory, and an enduring monument to his bravery, courage, and high-mindedness.

The lower floor and galleries of the district court-room were crowded when Rev. William Allen, the chairman, arose at 1:30 and announced in a few words the purpose for which they had gathered. Rev. Allen, himself a pioneer and an early minister of the Gospel when the days of Texas were young, occupied the chair, and on his left side sat Rev. J. W. Chalk, another old-time minister who vividly recalled the memories of another day. In state in front of

the judge's bench lay in a handsome coffin the remaining bones of the man in whose honor the services were being held. In front of the bier sat three living descendants—two sons, Rev. J. F. Denton of Weatherford, and Rev. John B. Denton, Jr., of Clay County, and a grandson, Professor William Baker of Ellis County.

After a few prefatory remarks by Rev. Allen, "America" was sung, led by President Thurman of the John B. Denton College. A prayer by Dr. Walter C. Lattimore of the First Baptist Church followed, and a quartette gave a rendition of "It is Well, My Soul."

Rev. Allen's Speech

Delivered before a large crowd in the district court-room. Rev. Allen's speech, in full, was as follows:

We congratulate you, comrade pioneers and fellow-countrymen, for that which you have accomplished in seeking out the remains of Captain John B. Denton, and giving him this day, after the lapse of sixty years, the pioneer and Christian burial which has been so long deserved. This tribute of our praise, these honors which we this day confer, and this public burial service of a noted Christian minister, lawyer, orator, and pioneer soldier who was a martyr to the civilization of Texas, had almost been forgotten and omitted for all time. But the name of your county and city bore the thought back on the tide of memory, and it freshly and impressively recurred to you that the name of your county and city perpetuates the name of an honorable man, who looked forward with great interest and sacrifice to the civilization of your state, and even yielded his life that you and your children

might have a peaceful legacy. It is well that you have met in this delightful but solemn service to-day. It is well that you have diligently and industriously pursued the work of investigation and discovery that has culminated into this hour. It is not only a proof of your appreciation of the martyr to Texas civilization, but that you have it in your hearts to perpetuate that civilization through your generation and see that it is clothed as in an evergreen chaplet and adorned with white roses and the lily of the valley. This your children will do in fond imitation of honored sires as long as the sacred spot of interment is known and a monument to Captain Denton stands out on their vision.

Captain Denton was born in the state of Tennessee on the twenty-eighth day of July, 1806. His mother died while he was an infant, and his father not long afterward. He was thus left an orphan and in penury. At twelve years of age he went with a family by the name of Wells from Tennessee to the wild territory of Arkansas. Tennessee, at the time he left it, had a population, all told, of less than three hundred thousand, and the territory of Arkansas of less than ten thousand. When he came to

Texas, in 1837, there were only thirty thousand white people, or about one to every nine square miles of territory. These figures show that Denton, all his life, was a frontiersman. He is therefore to be regarded as an actor always hewing the way and opening the paths for civilization, with no time or opportunity for that book-knowledge that has given so many people in youthful days great advantages. Orphanage, penury, and the wilds of Arkansas were all against the literary education of this youth. Hence he grew to eighteen years of age, so far as history shows, without ever having entered a school-room as a student; nor is it known that he ever did so afterward.

But it must not be inferred that Denton was altogether an uneducated boy. Of course, he was not educated in the accepted literary sense. But it is not proper to always estimate a man by his literary attainment, as valuable and profitable as such knowledge is. If we were only to proclaim that Denton was a scholar, and could show with it little that was valuable and profitable in his life, the services of this day would be a farce and an imposition upon general credulity,

and had better been left undone. But there is a proper way of estimating a man, and a proper way of looking into the features and intricacy of that education which adapts him to the circumstances and conditions of the life he is called to live, and which gives him the highest tone of utility to both society and his country. Sentiment is not always correct. It is half-way formed from habit and a way of fashionable thinking, and is, therefore, oftentimes indisposed to admit claims where merit and utility have planted a standard that should be recognized.

We affirm that Denton in his youth was educated, and that in the vicissitudes of his boy life the foundation was laid for his future eminence. The ruggedness of his early life taught him self-reliance; his orphanage taught him patience, forbearance, and perseverance; his penury and self-denial taught him sympathy and compassion; his experience taught him human nature and gave him large knowledge of his race; his hardships and exposure in a wild country taught him courage. Had he been college-bred and lacked these qualities he would have been unfitted for the territories in which he passed his life. These alone, in view

of what the frontiersman in that day was called to face and meet, were a good passport. No booklore, with all its acknowledged benefits and advantages, could have been substituted for these qualities to the man who was opening the paths for civilization.

Denton seems to have been born to be a leader, an actor, and not a scribe or secretary. Speaking suggestively, had he lived in the days of chivalry he would have won a silver spur; had he been an ancient Greek he would have won the laurel at Olympia; had he been a Frenchman in the days of Napoleon he would have been a field-marshal. The manner and conditions of his early life and his school of experience and hardship molded his character and thought in such a way that he needed only the polishing touches of literature to make him intellectually equal to what he was by natural endowment and experience—the peer of any man in all the West.

Denton entered upon public life almost in his youth. At eighteen years of age he appeared before the public as a young man of great natural talent, a destined genius in any chosen profession. Being schooled under a method

of hardship and privation, he was self-reliant, and of large experience. United with these he had a keen knowledge of human nature, and a courage that would meet any emergency, and rise above all obstacles. These are necessary elements in the education and character of the public man.

At this early age two events in his life should not be passed by unnoticed. He entered upon the marital relation, and assumed the responsibility of husband. Fortunately the lady to whom he was married was of fair literary attainment. In this way he was daily brought in contact with books, their utility, and the importance of literary culture. The faculties of his mind were in a high state of activity, and under the tutelage of the good woman of his choice, he took a grasp on books that quickly carried beyond the rudimentary and elementary principles of education. Although he was a student for the remainder of his brief life, and although he never had the advantage of school-room instruction and culture, yet it may be truthfully stated that he was fairly educated by the time he reached his majority. This shows some of the habit, nature, diligence,

and courage of the man whom we hold in memory to-day, and in honor of whom these services were appointed.

The other event deserving notice at this early age of Denton, is that he sought help which comes to man as a blessing from above. He sought at the mercy seat and obtained from God that grace of heart and spirit by which his energies could be better used for the spiritual welfare and uplifting of humanity. From that hour he felt consecrated to all good purposes. Through his youthful life of trial and hardship, his great heart pulsed with sympathy and compassion for his fellow-man. The feeling now became greatly enlarged and intensified. He felt that it was his duty to do all in his power to raise the moral condition of man to a higher plane, and save his soul. He saw as Washington did when he wrote: "Let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle."

Denton desired to be truly a moral man, and like Washington, he knew no better way than to found his moral integrity on the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Soon after these two events in the history of Denton, and before he had reached his majority he became a minister of the gospel in the Methodist Episcopal Church. Having had an experience that awoke his deepest sympathy, he was perhaps among the happiest of men for the privilege and opportunity of publicly bearing the good news to his fellow-man. Viewed as a man just about to enter the manhood stage of life, of fair education for that day, of fine natural endowment, and of large experience for one so young, he had a large vision of things upon which he could draw in illustration of his theme. When there is added to this his symmetrical form, broad forehead, steady blue eyes, and large compass of his oratorical voice, he stood before his audience the picture of a commander.

Dr. Homer S. Thrall, who wrote a history on Methodism, among many things eulogistic says: "When Denton addressed the multitudes that flocked to hear him preach upon

the sublime themes of the Gospel, his appeals were all but irresistible." This is the kind of preacher he was in Arkansas, in southern Missouri, and in Texas.

But mankind is too much disposed to place their hero on the plane of an art and hide him away in a bouquet of their own blandishment. But it is not our will to so treat the brave frontiersman whom we have met this day to honor.

That Captain Denton was well skilled in the art of oratory is a truth that has passed into history. That he was scarcely less gifted than Patrick Henry is hardly to be doubted. But if Patrick Henry lives in history more for his patriotism, foresight, and ripe judgment than for skill as an orator, it would be base in us to confine him to the level of a public declaimer. Admitting, then, that while oratory is excellence itself, we are far indisposed to confine the excellence of our hero to the plane of an orator. We prefer that this art shall appear in its own degree as a part of the man, and that along with it he possessed other and various excellences that shone in his life with even brighter effulgence.

We should view him in all his parts, as

patriot, opening up the paths for the march of civilization, as an humble Christian gentleman, as an impressive minister of the gospel, as an honorable lawyer, as an orator, as a man of courage, fighting the battles of his country, as a martyr to civilization.

These are all excellences of Denton's life and character; nor can his name be presented to us without these elements of his being. Dwelling in him they brought him into public notice, and have perpetuated his name. Their existence in his life and character renders his name memorable, and they are the voices which so audibly speak to us from his otherwise silent clay at this hour.

It was the memory of these excellences in Captain Denton's life and character that produced your diligence in restoring an almost forgotten history, and in gathering up his fast crumbling remains and giving them the place of first honor among those who sleep in Denton County's soil.

Denton set his foot on Texas soil to be a citizen January 2, 1837. This was scarcely eight months after the battle of San Jacinto. Texas at that time was an independent nation-

ality, and Sam Houston was her president. With a small white population of about thirty thousand, Denton came to add his name to the heroic number. He came in Christian spirit and as a minister of the Gospel of Christ. He came in large experience for one so young and in the grace of eloquence; he came as a schooled frontiersman and with the courage of a warrior; he came in love with Texas for the struggle she had made for independence; he came to preach peace, and when necessary, to beat back the foes of civilization; he came to be a Texan in the broad and technical meaning of that name in that day, when every man was expected to be a man of nerve, courage, and combat.

It was no task for such a man to be a Texan. He had been schooled in hardship unto that end; was in young manhood, intellectual, eloquent, courageous, and of undoubted moral integrity. He was of the right type as citizen and leader to do his part well in laying the foundations of that Christian civilization which is to-day a boast of our Lone Star State. Such a man at that time was a fine acquisition to the new nationality that had been purchased

by the blood of Goliad and the Alamo, and with the victory of San Jacinto.

There are a few people living yet who knew Denton well, and they all speak of him in the highest praise. They give proof by their words that he was a Christian gentleman, a recognized leader of men, a public declaimer of the first order, and a captain of judgment and courage. History gives only a few examples of such high recognition when bloom of youth had scarcely faded into strong manhood.

He became a lawyer after he came to Texas, but did not, however, quit the gospel ministry. Having settled in Clarksville, Red River County, he, as a lawyer, occasionally visited Old Warren to attend court. It is well authenticated that on these visits he preached at the residence of the Dugan family, with whom he had acquaintance in the wilds of Arkansas. He chose the law very much on the ground of necessity, for he had around him a wife and children, and was, therefore, put to the necessity of looking after his finances.

In that day of frontier life and hardship, every man of sound limb was expected to care

for his own house, and in choosing the law it was only an act accepting the conditions of the country, and removed him and his family from dependence on the people. He realized that a man should "provide things honest in the sight of all men"; that he who would not provide for his own house "is worse than an infidel"; and that the law, honorably pursued, is not incompatible with the Christian ministry. As a lawyer, because of his gentlemanly spirit, integrity, and skill, he was in great demand, and in that scarce day maintained his family well.

But we have met here to give pioneer and Christian burial to this noble man. Around us to-day cluster many fond memories, together with that tragic scene when he so ruthlessly and bravely fell for frontier protection, and in the interest of Texas. He will sleep in an honored grave as do Fannin, Travis, Crockett and Bowie, and all that slumbering and moldering host who yielded their lives, shedding generously their patriotic blood for Texas. This is his third interment, and yet it is the first in which we have had the opportunity and pleasure to pay to him the honors that have

been so long deserving. How different these surroundings in the presence of this stately court-house at the center of this beautiful city, from that burial he received sixty years ago.

That was the day after the battle of Village Creek, where he received his mortal wound by the hand of the savage Indian.

There was no court-house and city there, no churches with steeples pointing with the finger of hope to the skies, and no bells to sound the funeral dirge. It was a wild waste, where wolves and panthers dwelt, and where the savage roamed and battled against advancing civilization. There were present then only a few comrade soldiers to dig his grave while yet standing guard, wrap him in his blanket and let him down into his lonely grave. There they did their duty as best they could, left around marks and signs of memory, and then in solemn silence took up the line of march to the borders of the settlements. The territory of Denton County has held his remains since that day. His blood is in her soil and his crumbling body is a part of her dust.

This day we do an honorable deed and hold services that have long been due. From this

day the character of the old pioneers will be better reflected on coming generations. When a suitable monument shall be erected at this place of interment, and as is to be hoped, the statue of a brave frontiersman erected upon it, it will provoke the coming people to consider the cost of the civilization to which they will be heirs; and if they prove themselves worthy of the legacy, they will still advance until Texas shall not only be noted for the vastness of its territory, but shall lead this union of states by the intelligence and the virtue of its people.

Rev. Chalk was introduced and made an impromptu talk on Captain Denton. Himself a pioneer, he interestingly discoursed on early days in Texas. "You are giving his remains the interment they deserve," he said. "Denton, had he lived, would have taken his place with Houston, Rusk, Hemphill, Bayler, and those others whose names have been handed down in Texas history. He was the equal, the peer, of any man living." After paying more tribute to Captain Denton's memory, Mr. Chalk continued: "In this day

and time, people have but hazy ideas of what living was in the early days. Some people the other day didn't know what "jerked" beef was. All you old timers know, don't you? [To which there was a chorus of "yes" from the old settlers.] That and corn bread, ground in steel hand mills were what we had to eat." He went over the hardships and paid a warm tribute to the pioneer women as well as the men, without whom the men would have been poor indeed.

Rev. Allen then introduced in turn the two sons and the grandson of Captain Denton, each of whom made a short but feeling talk of thanks and gratitude for the honor bestowed through their ancestor on them.

The quartette was again called on and rendered "Some Sweet Day," and then "Rock of Ages," during the singing of which the pall-bearers—Messrs. E. B. Orr, L. Willis, J. M. Swisher, John W. Gober, J. H. Hawkins, and W. C. Wright—lifted the coffin and bore it to the grave in the court-house yard, followed first by the relatives present, and then the spectators.

The grave for the last resting-place of the

remains had been dug the day before, and herein the coffin was slowly dropped. Two songs were sung at the grave and a prayer rendered, and the body of John B. Denton, preacher, lawyer, Indian-fighter, pioneer, and hero, was in its last resting-place, the third time since his death, in 1841—the first on the banks of Oliver Creek, the second when his friend John Chisum exhumed the remains from there and gave them burial at the Chisum ranch near Bolivar.

Prior to the interment many saw the crumbling bones in the coffin. Very few were intact; all showed the evidences of the disintegrations of time, were browned and discolored from their long rest beneath the soil. But about them in the mind's eye was a halo, a spirit of heroic fortitude, of unselfish courage, and loyal patriotism to the new country, for whose up-building and for whose later civilization he gladly gave up his life.

The Life of John B. Denton

His Boyhood

The young mother looking down into the face of her baby boy always looks in the fondest hope. He is the darling offspring of her own body, and there is no other object on the earth half so lovely and interesting to her awaiting soul. He is her young bud that is to be a lovely fragrant flower, her young scion that is to be a mighty oak. He is her dear baby boy, cooing in his cradle, with nothing but a beautiful outlook beaming in the mother's eye.

Although man is the slowest growth of all earthly animal beings, and the days of his nursing by far the longest, it seems almost unfair, in view of a mother's delight and joy, that it should be as short as it is. A happy mother, having now grown old, and looking backward over her years, once said, "The happiest time of my life was when I had my little boys around my knees." It is, with all its cares, toils, and watchings, the blissful period in a mother's life.

Yet this happy season must have an end. There is hope held in expectation. There is always a whisper in the mother's heart as she counts the chances in the human life that, while something may befall, something may overtake, something may go wrong, something of evil may embrace, it will always be with some other mother's boy and not her own.

In the wilds of Tennessee, on the morning of the 28th of July, 1806, a note rang out on the morning air, that the population of Tennessee had increased. That a child was born. It was John B. Denton. Being born amidst the tangled forests where the hand of the white man was just applied, and civilization was only beginning to dawn, it was not then known that the child's destiny was to stand all his days in the dawn of the coming light, and with willing self-sacrifices prepare the way for the comfort and happiness of those who should follow.

The first calamity that fell upon Denton was the loss of his mother. She did not long look upon his smiling face until she was taken away. With scarcely anything else to leave, she left to Tennessee, Arkansas, and Texas

the legacy of her son, John B., with her prayer in his behalf and her blessing upon his head.

Some leave to the world the legacy of millions. They may be misdirected, wasted, and squandered. Jay Gould left to the world the legacy of a daughter who has proven herself more valuable to the world than all his millions. Some bequeath to the world the legacy of a child whose virtuous, self-sacrificing spirit and impressive character will be a great blessing to humanity. There is much mistaken notion about who leaves a good legacy to the world. People are too much trained to think of money, that builds only in a material way. Hence many great legacies have skipped the human thought.

But here is left a legacy to the world, a motherless baby boy in the tangled woods of a new country. He is without a mother's kiss and soothing voice. Perhaps no eye turned on him in hopeful look. As he lay helpless in his cradle some one may have said that it would have been better if he had never been born. But he was the infant gift of a loving mother to the world. It was all she had to give. She, like the poor woman that cast the two mites

into the treasury, gave all she had with her blessing on the infant's head.

But we called the loss of the mother a calamity. Did we speak that word in the wisdom of knowledge, or did we not speak it after the ordinary mode of reasoning and thinking? There is such mysteriousness about that which is best, and such application of unseen wisdom and force, that the data which would construct geometrical science is not like the data working in the problem of a human life that possesses both will and intelligence.

Whether Denton's loss of his mother was in truth a calamity upon him, so far as it concerned all the years that he lived, is too mysterious a question for human weakness to decide with satisfactory precision. A mother's importance and usefulness in a family, as a rule, no one would hardly deny. That the loss of a mother to many a child would work a calamity upon that child is very probable. The world has witnessed that things are continually both getting in the way and out of the way without cause so far as the human mind can trace. Of course, much of it is not human liking. Yet how often does history show that things

which were not according to the human liking, proved themselves in the end for the best. Therefore, when we reach out exploring into the problem of a human life we become involved, if not entangled, with forces, both seen and unseen, which have something to do with human life and with human destiny. The problem of the world involves the idea of the progressive whole on the way to perfection. Associated with this is the complex idea of the units that constitute the whole, their uses, their places, and their education; not so much that education which comes of the school-room, but that which is provisional through the operation of unseen forces seasoned with observation and experience.

Deprivation, certain things called hardships, or something that tries even a boy, will show in his character when he is grown up and takes his station among men. It is true that in this school all boys are not affected alike. It is true again that the old Spartan methods are avoided as much as possible. It would, perhaps, be better that most children should not be subjected to great privation. Yet it is maintained that privation and certain hardships

in youth have been useful factors in molding the character of many an illustrious life. It creates endurance, forbearance, compassion, courage, and contentment under conditions that would otherwise produce unrest and press hard against a man's courage. When Denton lost his mother he was subjected, by this deprivation, to a life of greater struggle and hardships than would have otherwise been his lot. But who is wise enough to know that it was not for the best? There are some things so deep and far-reaching that the intellectual man is but a child when he looks into them. The data of Denton's life is all that is left. It is satisfactory to Texas and to the world. To have changed the conditions of his childhood and youth might have led to changes in his character, and there might have been produced for the world a man of less utility.

· In view of human intellectual weakness; in view of the closed door that shuts out much of the light that would otherwise shine on the problem of a human life; in view of the fact that Denton became the man he was, and that he was useful and satisfactory to humanity; and in view of the fact that we must forever remain

ignorant of the changes that might have been wrought had his mother lived—we can never know, considering the way events have turned, whether Denton's loss of his mother in childhood was a calamity or not.

Leaving his Cradle

But the day came when the baby boy unwrapped his swaddling-clothes and crawled out of his cradle to meet the morning sun amid the primeval forests, to hear the twittering of the birds that sang from the tall oaks, and the sound of the woodman's axe, as stroke on stroke he opens up the way to civilization, comfort, and happiness; to see the sun and the blue sky, and to look out upon the open world upon which fortune had cast his lot; and in his childish thought think upon the thousand things, all of which were new and strange to his childhood gaze.

He and his father were in poverty. While his father was stricken with a sense of the loss he had sustained, his little boy, John B., knew nothing of his mother, knew nothing of her beaming face and smiles, of her caresses, love, and hope. He simply had met a condition of

things and knew not that there was anything better in all the world. Such was John B. Denton when the world began to introduce itself to him.

He was now to make his start, first from a child in the cradle to the rambling boy, wondering at the many things he saw, for a new world had opened on his vision. Then he must grow to a boy of larger size, able to do the smaller things, and to be of some service. He must begin to realize that life meant more than mere existence, that he had hands which should be employed and a mind which should think.

The conditions were unfavorable, but he knew it not. And not knowing the world, and therefore being unable to hold things in contrast, he was perhaps as contented and as happy as any boy who had the advantages of school and churches and all things concomitant with an improved civilization. The birds entertained him with their music, the forests and running brooks were his company, and nature was his study. Daily he saw things that gave him new inspiration.

It is said that "man is the architect of his own fortune." But let it be remarked that

things are sometimes so beautifully said they pass for more than the truth they contain. This remark may well apply to the elegantly dressed saying just quoted. All men obtain their fortune or misfortune, but it cannot be truthfully maintained that any one, of himself, builds his life and character.

Mankind are so seriously and intricately knit together that there is an interwoven web connecting all, whether it is apprehended or not. There are, through these conditions, circumstances of influence *ab extra*, that work through the meshes of life's woven web as though they were themselves living forces. Hence "no man lives to himself and no man dies to himself." Nor can it be positively maintained that a man is the architect of his own fortune. There are conditions, influences, and forces involved that largely help to make the man.

Again, it is often remarked that "all men have an equal chance." This is most frequently applied to people getting sustenance or wealth; and is used as an apology or excuse for not lending a hand in feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and doing many needful things. But this old saying, if any difference, is more

untrue than the other. All men do not have an equal chance. And again, the human judgment is very much in fault as to what are the best chances for making a man of utility to the world. It must ever remain thus until selfishness has yielded to thoughts and purposes for the common good. Fathers sometimes, and perhaps often, use processes to make men of their sons, and yet in a way unknown to themselves, they countermand the conditions that are for the best interests of their sons as men of utility to the world.

It need hardly be remarked that too much labor bestowed to make the life of youth free from struggle, privation, and battle, may be pleasant enough for the youth, but will prove a curse to the man yet to be. Hence, how often do we see, where youth is in privation, in struggle, and battle, such men as John B. Denton developed. A class of men, while yet boys, inured to changing temperatures, schooled in the midst of difficulties that try the heart and produce courage, they finally come to the front, not as yielding spirits, but as men harnessed for battle.

No, men do not all have an equal chance.

But the world is largely ignorant of the methods that constitute the best chances. It is likely to remain so for a long time. The world has to be made to look into deeper recesses than culture in science and literature, even into those conditions which work their own processes on human nature and write largely in human character.

Men have no more an equal chance than that they are born equal or have equal physical strength. There are conditions that will improve the strength of the body, and there are conditions that lead to knowledge, and there are other conditions that bear upon human nature and mold the character, but these cannot produce equally in physical strength, knowledge, and character. Inequality must remain, and likewise the unequal chances of men. Yet happy is he who meets with the conditions that make him the best thing of utility that is possible.

From Tennessee to Arkansas

The boy had now grown to eight years of age. We lose sight of his father. He had also died. Hence John B. was left at early age without father or mother. His father, so far as is

known, was a clever, good-hearted man, but always struggling in poverty. The active, well-formed, blue-eyed frontier boy is now with a family named 'Wells. Whether the Wells family were relations of the Dentons is unknown, but the evidence indicates that they were not.

Mr. Wells turned his eyes upon the young territory of Arkansas, having a population at the time of only ten thousand. It was a woody, wild country, where bear and other game were abundant. A country well suited to try a man or a boy in self-denial, in self-possession, in courage, and in self-reliance. It was a country where schools and churches were almost unknown. The settlers were too scattering as yet to build school-houses, churches, and meet in congregations.- It was a wild condition of primeval forests, with the sound of the woodman's axe ringing out daily upon the air. Yet it was a territory whither many good and brave men and women had gone, and had carried with them the respectability of moral character, and many of a pious, Christian life.

It was to this territory that the Wells family and young Denton emigrated. Tennessee in that day, and especially the part they left, was

very much unchanged from nature's arrangement, but now young Denton looked into the deeper entanglements and saw how nature had applied her hand, and what the whole earth would be without man upon it. The whole scene, to the eyes of the boy, was beautiful to look upon, and brought to his young mind a vast field for contemplation.

In this natural scenery, these creatures of the forest, this silence that thrills the soul, o'er-spread by the silent blue sky, and at night with the stars that speak their voices to the tenting sleeper, can any doubt but that the boy with the Wells family was a companion with nature, holding that communion which was preparing him for the issues lying out before him but hidden as yet from his view?

But, adapting himself to these conditions, he applied his young hands in helping the Wells family build their first cabins in the forest, open a garden spot and a field, and with his rifle furnished their table with turkey and deer.

Leading the Wells Family

Life grew monotonous, probably too much so for a boy of young Denton's temperament and inclination. There was likely to be revolution in the Wells family under justifiable cause, but not otherwise. There is sometimes in a boy something that parents themselves do not understand. Yet it is so grounded in the boy and so manifest to himself that to treat him contrariwise is but to sow the seed of revolution. It may be further stated that a boy of destiny sometimes acts a part for which he is denounced as disobedient and refractory. This may be because he has glimpses of himself not at all understood by other people. Yet all the while he says little or nothing about such things. He is simply waiting for his hour to come; and should such conditions ever arise, he is fitted to fill his place, and will then show to humanity what kind of man he is, and will meet every emergency.

But the evidence seems to be that young Denton was not treated well in the Wells family. They looked upon him as a sort of alien, and that as an alien he was not worthy of certain

rights and privileges in common with the other members of the family. He was given greater and harder tasks; was spoken to complainingly; his name was called too often on lines of business. These and a multitude of corresponding things provoked in the boy a spirit of revolution. If they could not be amended the case was made out; that is, he would resort to the extreme alternative, which is the common right of the oppressed.

This kind of reproach has been saddled on the world long enough. It is high time mankind were getting rid of every vestige of it. If all men sprang of one blood, of which there is the highest proof, then humanity is a brotherhood. This truth will stand, regardless of the errors and practical ways of humanity. Apologies in the way of pseudo-beliefs, licensing wrongs, should be condemned in every quarter. Had the genealogical tables of the world all been kept, all could see the "kith and kin" relationship that circulates in the blood of all. Then all might be brought to see the common rights of all, and sing the song with Robert Burns,

"A man is a man for a' that and a' that."

But this relation with the Wells family was

not without its use. The school of experience is where judgment is rendered of right and wrong, where the heart is touched and made tender. It is the school that turns the heart in sympathy toward all who are wronged and are made to suffer. The Divine One himself, through a material experience as a man, learned, if possible, more sympathy and compassion for man. In that experience he not only saw, but felt. He endured the trials, buffetings, hatred, scorn, and death of a man, and with this experience connected with His divine essence He will be forever the highest advocate of man's cause. Interceding, forgiving, teaching, helping, and forever with his body thrust between, marked with the scars of human existence, he will appeal to the highest source that man may be helped out of all his distresses.

John B. Denton, at the early age of twelve years, had an experience impressive and which he could never forget. Having been treated as an alien in the family, he ever afterward took interest in oppressed and suffering humanity as his special brothers. Being hated, he learned to love; being overtaken, he learned to lift burdens; being robbed of common rights

and privileges, he sought the common rights of all; being reduced to servile labor, he resolved that, in so far as he was able, all should be free. His young heart was filled with compassion for all who were wronged.

Though it was in the wild woodlands of Arkansas, where nightly the lonesome howling of the wolf was heard, and every echo of the woodman's axe was answered by the shriek of the panther or the growl of some other wild beast that stood opposing in the pathway of civilization, it made no difference with young Denton at that serious hour. His mind was made up. His purpose could not be shaken. His young heart had been changed through a rough school of experience. He felt its baptismal fires burning, and while he was not inflamed, he was, nevertheless, resolved.

Not able to be free as a boy should be free, he bade the Wells family farewell, and stepped out of their cabin door. In frontier dress not of the best, with bullet pouch, powder-horn, and flint-lock rifle on his shoulder, he walked away to make or to meet his fortune, whatever it might be. Anyway, he was free of the Wells family and could breathe the free air. Having been a

pupil in a hard school he went to do battle for himself, resigned to any difficulties that might attend his pathway. Once gone forward, he had no thought of retracing.

The common outcry of humanity would be, There goes a boy in whom there is no hope. And, indeed, to any one who could not read the thought of that boy's heart such judgment would be largely correct. But this boy had been in a hard school. His departure was more the action of a revolutionary spirit against intolerable evils than of self-will. He was affected because what he regarded as his common rights had been taken away. He felt that he had come to the court of last resort, where the parting of the ways was his only alternative. He was resolved to be better than those who had given him his tasks. He was resolved to be a friend to all boys and to sympathize with them and help them in the day their common rights might be taken away. Thus, growing to manhood, he sympathized with all people in their distresses.

The Years of Silence

From this period there are a few years of comparative silence. There is but little said or known of Denton for about six years. There is evidence, however, that he maintained a sturdy character and was of stout heart. But with whom he lived and how he fared is not known with sufficient precision for narration.

One thing is well known, that he passed these six years without education, even as he had passed his preceding years. The embarrassments shutting out education can only be surmised. It is probable there were no schools in the country where he dwelt. And it is equally probable that no one gave him encouragement to get an education. The open book of nature was all he had to feast his mind. When this is well looked upon it is wonderfully improving. From it many books are copied. Hence young Denton's culture consisted of large and varied experience and the things he learned through nature's voice. Fortunately for all, nature is an open book, and to a boy that opens his heart to receive instruction she pours in a flood of light and knowledge.

Young Denton in a thousand ways could see nature's ways and hear her voice. Hence in after life, when he became a public man, he had this great source continually before him, on which he could draw to make his illustrations and speak his parables. When, as a boy, climbing the hills amidst the forests, he saw the struggling vines oppressed by larger growth that took no thought, his mind was brought to think of himself, of his own captivity and oppression. When he heard the voice of thunder he was reminded of the unseen forces that can shake the universe. When he saw the lightning flash and the stateliest oak riven into shreds in a twinkling of time, he thought how foolish it is for man to boast and exalt himself, seeing how quickly he may be laid low.

The youthful Denton had been reading nature in a thousand ways and was intelligent. He had been walking in these fields of experience from whence school-room text-books are made, until he could dictate chapters for the enjoyment and culture of other youth. But in the midst of all this he was without the art of reading.

It can hardly be said that it was his choice to

neglect books, nor of those with whom he lived. For Arkansas Territory, even at this date, had less than thirty thousand inhabitants. With this scattering population, and with the anxiety and rustle to get materially comfortable, even the old log-cabin school-house was put to great disadvantage, if not entirely omitted.

**Conversion — Marriage — Pupil of his
Wife — Ministerial Labors and Ora-
tory**

We have now approached the period when John B. Denton was to be no longer regarded as a boy, but was to take his place in the list of men. Yet he was only eighteen years of age. But counting his large experience, and that in frontier life he had for some time largely borne the responsibilities of a man, and though not fully bearded, the school of his life had built in him such sobriety of thought and manly deportment, he was easily recognized as a man among his fellows.

But there is connected with his life at this period an event of vast importance, to himself in particular, and to others in general. It was the event that laid the foundation of his future

career and usefulness. The pioneer preachers of Methodism had now begun to spread the tidings of salvation all over the sparsely settled territory of Arkansas. Among these were a number of strong men. But they all preached the Gospel after the apostolic mode, in the glow and fervency of the intensest earnestness.

The territory was now passing over the conditions that had forced neglect. The opportunity was now given the fathers and mothers, who under forced circumstances had fallen from grace, to renew themselves again in Christian experience, Gospel truth, and knowledge. It likewise gave the great opportunity to their sons and daughters.

This Gospel proclamation was the beginning of a better day; for it is the handmaid of all true civilization in all Christian countries. It imparts new thought, turning a man inward in thoughts upon himself, and outward in thoughts upon his neighbors and his country. It gives a new inspiration for schools, an improved intelligence, and an advanced civilization. It produces dissatisfaction with the old régime of society, and begins a new catalogue of manners. It brings a man to a halt in many ways, impresses

him over and over again that he is an immortality, and that, therefore, he should be a man approved both in the eyes of other men and of heaven.

This was largely like something new to Denton. He woke up as from a dream. He placed himself at the mercy seat and sought the peace of his soul by becoming reconciled to God. He obtained his new birth and felt the thrill of it in his own spirit. Not the mere assent of the mind to a truth and confession, but the deep conviction that "God's love was shed abroad in his heart." Though he was unacquainted with the technical phrases of theology, he had a new experience that had burned away his sins, and had left the warmth of the fire still burning in his spirit. He realized what John the Baptist said: "He that cometh after me shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and fire."

Considering the kind of young man Denton had been made by former experiences and observation of nature, he had now received in his heart a qualification for largely more extended usefulness. Without something of this kind of experience a man's life is less positive, and in his negative nature he is proportionally

less impressive on society. A man living and acting among his fellows needs something within him that glows, until the very heat of it shall fall upon his neighbors.

Conjointly with Denton's conversion there was born in him a great desire for usefulness and helpfulness towards his fellow-men. While he would have no boy galled with much of his former experience, he felt great anxiety that all young men should be qualified with an experience of soul similar to his own.

This brings the thought to that wonderful doctrine, a call to the Christian ministry. It appertains to the life of John B. Denton and it would be next to criminal to pass it without notice. He could never have been a legal minister of the Gospel in the Methodist Episcopal Church without confessing to a divine call to be a preacher. It is the judgment and belief of this church that her ministers are called of God; peculiarly called to that high office. They do not base this judgment and belief on human reason alone, but on the teachings of the holy word. And when is added to that word an impression on the soul that will not forego or be repressed, it is a sign to that man

that he has a divine call to preach the tidings of salvation unto men.

Denton, now acting the part of a man, although he had not reached his majority, confessed a call to the Christian ministry. He was uneducated, so far as related to book-lore, and the art of using books. He certainly must have been largely ignorant of Bible readings and Bible doctrine. But he was a converted sinner and walked and communed with God in the kingdom of heaven. He therefore had a message for his fellow-man.

Though he was unable to speak on general points of doctrine with the wisdom of the schooled theologian, yet he could speak upon the points of greatest concern to all men, that men should believe the Gospel, repent, and be saved. To this he could add his own personal experience of salvation.

But the thought is called to another very important event at this period. Denton got married. The girl of his choice was named Mary Greenlee Stewart. As is reported she was of the state of Louisiana. She was of amiable disposition, and what made her exceedingly important, she was fairly well educated.

It is impossible for imagination to picture the joys and happiness of that young twain made one flesh, as they dwelt in the humble log cabin on the outskirts of the settlements in Arkansas. The scene seems to be better suited for the brush of the artist rather than the pen of the biographer.

On the one side was young Denton, eighteen or perhaps nineteen years of age, almost six feet in stature, very erect, chivalrous, with black and slightly curling hair, blue eyed, of large experience and observation for one so young, and a heart but recently made pure through the work of regeneration wrought upon his soul. On the other side the young wife, nigh to his own age, of most agreeable temper, fairly well educated, industrious, satisfied, Christian, resigned, and willing to endure with her young husband all that life should be made to meet.

Now that other scene, on which angels look with joy when the evening hour has come. In those days family altars burned with spiritual life more than now. In the hush of birds and repose of nature, the pine-knot fire was kindled to fresh glow. The young wife reads a lesson that came down from the skies; they kneel in

recognition of the God of nature, and their God; and young Denton leads in prayer and supplication. Happy scene, O holy hour! Let him who says there is no God, now assent that the forces in which he believes, should make themselves a God that hears the suppliant voice.

THE PUPIL OF HIS WIFE. Young Denton was now determined to be a minister of the Gospel, but was not yet, so far as any record shows, authorized by the church to exercise himself in this high office. Called of God, he was like a man elected to office, but awaiting the day of qualification. Like a wise man under high calling he was thinking of the worldly wisdom that should be united with heavenly enduement to make him efficient in leading souls to Christ. He fully realized that a divine call to the ministry included the adjunct call to get ready. Hence he, in his ignorance of books, became the pupil of his wife.

It was a school of two in the log cabin, a teacher and one pupil, the young wife and her young husband. The wife was not superior to the husband when taken altogether, but she had the advantage of art. She knew some things he did not know, while he knew many

things she did not know. The things which he did not know and which his wife could teach him were very important and absolutely necessary in the ministerial office. Denton was a diligent pupil, and the young wife was a faithful, loving teacher.

The world shall never know all that was in that school taught on the frontier settlements of Arkansas in the year 1826. The imagination might picture an unseemly lonesomeness. But the contrary is the true picture. These children of the frontier were so accustomed to this way and that way of getting along, that they saw nothing unusual or strange about their school in the log cabin. And again there was too much love, hope, and ambition in front of the daubed, stick-built chimney for lonesomeness or any other evil spirit to ever creep in at their door.

Along with this school must be associated the struggle for sustenance. The garden and the field were to be prepared and tilled, old clothing renovated, and new stocks provided as purse would allow. Not an hour was to be lost. When not engaged in useful outdoor employment, Denton was at his books, learning to read those elementary principles upon which a mind

already active could build a knowledge of general science and literature.

Scarcely a year had gone when the young wife began to think that her husband was ready for a higher school. Having a suggestive and originating mind, he began to read between the lines and to apprehend that which was about to be said if the author was a legitimate reasoner. The school naturally broke itself up into social converse and reading. Of nights, they still burned the pine-knots, but Denton both read the divine word and offered the evening prayer. He never went to school elsewhere.

To say that in after life John B. Denton never became scholarly in fair degree is to say that which is largely untrue. Yet many a man, under such conditions, would never have escaped his ignorance. It shows what is in the range of possibility, and should awake dormant thousands to new ideas of courage and perseverance. Denton, as a subject, is an object lesson to the world. His wife is a beautiful illustration of the place woman can fill when around the hearth-stone; the delightfulness of her helpful ways when toned down in the prudence of woman's love.

It is a great blessing to humanity that under hard circumstances at least a few men appear whom neither time nor conditions can suppress. In this list may be placed those whose minds have been stirred and put in a high state of activity. This is the foundation that produces thirst for knowledge. Hence the prime office of instructors, in the first place, is to see that the minds of their pupils are put in good working order. It is probable that many a boy has finished his college course whose mind has never been properly awakened and trained. Hence many, apparently brilliant, are soon lost sight of, and others go on and reach higher attainments than was public expectation. This is likely to remain thus until special care is taken to wake the faculties.

JOHN B. DENTON A MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL. When skepticism and indifferent thinking is put out of the mind, men are forced to acknowledge that the Christian ministry, called of God, is the most exalted height of man on earth. Concede the first part of this statement and the second holds true. Men, of course, have their opinions, and many are those who are indifferent whether the Christian ministry is degraded or

upheld. There is one thing no one can escape; that whosoever is called of God to preach the Gospel has a high office before men.

John B. Denton found himself on this pinnacle in 1826, when he was just nineteen years of age. This was the work, not of human hands, but the work and call of God. Human minds can indorse and human hands can confirm the call from on high that is spoken into the human understanding, but it is God who calls and pours the anointing oil.

To affirm that God does not call men to the ministry of his word is to affirm too largely his absence from his church, for which he gave the blood of his Son. It is to place God's church on a parity with the ethical philosophy of the world as established among men. It is like leaving a man, unassisted by grace, to lead the people to Christ. Indeed, it is to be skeptical of things of God, of the divine presence in his word and in his church. There is no half-way ground between faith and skepticism. God is over all and in all, or else he is of no value to man, a mere myth of superstition, and no more to be regarded than the gods of the heathen.

Hence, when we find Denton exalted to the Christian ministry, we must look upon him in a Bible sense, called of God to minister as a man in the spiritual affairs of this world. Not that he was made thereby into the impossible, as many of the foolish of this world vainly imagine and falsely reason; for he was still a man of the earth, a brother to all, subject to disease, old age, and death; and having the weakness and passions of a man, was subject to mistaken judgment and shortcomings. He was called of God in the weakness, infirmity, and imperfection of a man, to preach the Gospel and minister to those that are likewise weak.

From 1826 to 1836 John B. Denton was a faithful minister of the gospel in Arkansas and southern Missouri. The story of his preaching is largely without written record. It was no doubt fairly written, so far as relates to conference records and notices of his eloquence and power as a pulpit orator as published in the few journals in the territory of his ministerial operation. But it was in a day and in a field where the conditions were not favorable for preserving the records. Nearly all have been lost, both of church records and press notices.

The tide of immigration that flowed in so impressed the people with an ever-changing condition and so occupied them with pressing engagements that they took little thought of recording or preserving history, either of themselves generally, or of any one man in particular.

This is the condition into which the biographer is called to look when attempting to give the story of Denton's ministerial career in Arkansas and southern Missouri. Much might be said in refrain touching on the legendary tales of his life; but inasmuch as the task is to write true biography, and not a tale of mixed truth and fiction, these must be omitted. More than three-quarters of a century have passed since Denton began his ministry in Arkansas, and almost three-quarters since he left that state and immigrated to Texas.

There remain only a few living witnesses, and, of course, they were very young. They are now old men and women. Wherever they are found the name of Denton is fondly cherished. They love his name, and their faces light up and their eyes sparkle as they turn to the old memories of what they saw and the things their fathers told them of Denton's pulpit power, grace, and

eloquence. There is to be found nowhere a dissenting voice, but the utmost agreement that Denton was a power in his day, even in his youthful ministry.

With that which is known, the matter cannot be meditated upon or looked into, without feeling a creeping sense of the loss humanity has sustained for lack of fuller records of this notable man. He was certainly one of those ideal and teaching characters now and then furnished the world as a subject of study. They are of great service to mankind. Held in memory they are enlightening mileposts in life's journey. They are guide-boards telling the way. They are open books of instruction, creating courage, hope, and giving new inspiration to life's weary traveler. They are pictures upon which the tired man can look with pleasure and encouragement when he sits down to rest. They are indispensable to youth; for they awake in them new aspiration to be something of utility to the world.

Enough remains to give a good lesson of instruction. The youth of the land, in the critical period of forming their characters, should find time to turn their eyes on such a character as John B. Denton. They should

consider the possibilities that lie out before the honest, industrious boy who labors through difficulties; that it is possible to reach the goal, though it be through bramble or over a mountain. With the object lesson continually before them, they should see that their duty is to march unceasingly, and not lose time by sitting down and counting the costs. If embarrassments arise and hardships overtake, that it is none the worse in the fulfillment of life; that life is a school, and that it does not always prove for the best when it goes easy with the lad.

In Texas

The new immigrant into Texas at this period was the joy of all the people. It was now fall of the year, but the same year in which the battle of San Jacinto had been fought and won. With the overthrow of Mexican authority and the capture of Santa Anna, the Mexican president, the liberty of Texas was regarded as secured. Texas had previously declared her independence of Mexico, but now through unexampled chivalry, victory had proven her title to that which she had previously declared before the eyes of all people.

Texas was now breathing the air and taking the action of an unfettered and independent national individuality. She was a new star in the galaxy of nations, and was beginning to be so recognized. She needed immigrants and families to add to her meager population. A vast territory, and with as yet scarcely more than thirty thousand, she had broken the yoke of her oppressor and thrown off the burden of authority that could never lead her as a state into the enjoyments and liberty of an advanced civilization.

In view of her vast and rich territory, granted in parcels free to all, only upon their coming and asking; in view that population is necessary to make a great country, it would have been next to criminal not to have invited immigration and offered inducements. Had the world seen then, as the world sees now, the population of Texas would have been largely more than it is, and thousands who were in want would have had better opportunities. It was lack of knowledge and heroic undertaking in those days that continued many in poverty and held in restraint the progress of Texas.

Denton crossed Red River in the fall of the year 1836, in company with Lyttleton Fowler,

who was a Methodist preacher of fine character and power. Denton came a young man in the harness of a Gospel minister to do missionary work among the scattering settlements of Texas. He was about thirty years of age. Physically strong, of adaptable temper, and inured to privation, he came to stay. He was a Texan from the hour he crossed Red River in company with Lyttleton Fowler. He was in love with Texas before he came. The struggle Texas had made and was still making was of such kinship to his own nature, that he was anxious to be a participant in her struggles, growth, and civilization. He loved to assist her struggling souls into salvation, and the same sympathetic chord of love made him anxious to help Texas unto her new birth of freedom, civilization, and happiness. He needed no culture in the ways of Texas people. He had to put little restraint on himself, for he already had a similar experience to Texans on the frontier settlements of Arkansas.

He was a Texan in love with Texas, and the people received him as a brother. He came to be a Texan, to live and labor with the Texas people, and when he finished his labors and liv-

ing, to finally rest in a Texas grave. And surely if a man ever went in quest of a Texas grave, he found it in all the grace of one who spends his life in his country's cause to make a better day for those who should follow.

But when Denton came to Texas his magic life checkmated much evil that afflicts a new country that settles up slowly. The human nature is too prone, under monotonous conditions, to grow into indifference about things that could be made better. These things creep insidiously upon a man, until in manners and some of the decencies of life, he grows negligent, and almost forgets the manner of man he once was. And even the good wife may lose circumspection. They both alike decline into indifference until the order of home gets to be what it should not be. This always gives a culture that digressively affects their children. Thus, sometimes, more is lost than they have gained in their herds of cattle.

Though John B. Denton was himself always a frontiersman, yet such a life of decency and respectability as his infused itself into the manners of the people and into the order of their families. This helped them to keep up the

olden culture and to preserve incorrupt the better taste of society. The very Gospel he preached contained all that is herein said. It cultivated his own life and manners, and through him the life and manners of many others. To have such a man to dwell with the people on a frontier settlement, and especially one that slowly settled, is always of incalculable benefit.

Denton was of service in maintaining the decency and respectability of society not only in the sense of one who mingles, but he was also a means of assembling the people, for he gave to them a preaching day. Not as an election day or political gathering, but a day for the assembling of both the sexes, a test day for best appearance in dress and manners to hear the Gospel preached. This was a saving salt among the people of the frontier settlements, even as it is in all places. Of course, what is herein stated is like speaking in an unknown tongue to people who never hear the Gospel preached, and who take no thought of the good that flows out of it.

While Denton was a brave man and fought back the foes of civilization in carnal warfare, he should not be forgotten in other respects,

nor misjudged of his utility in other fields of his labor. There are many foes to fight on frontier settlements besides Indians. Unless they are fought from the settlements and from the very hearthstones the so-called civilization will not prove worth the cost. It would be wicked for the white man to supplant the Indian to place another with only finer art. He must place in the Indian's stead the white race with the white man's respectability. Cruelty is never justifiable unless something good grows out of it.

The utility of Denton on the frontier settlements is reflected in the lives of a few old people who knew him and who yet survive. Under his ministry their eyes were opened and their hearts were touched until they became ashamed of the thing they were, and sought at the mercy seat that renovating birth that sets a man on new ways of thinking and conduct.

In this way Denton was of great service to the people upon the frontier settlements. It was often remarked by the people who came to stay in those days, and by many who came and went back, that Texas society was far in advance of all they had expected to find. The gentility,

courtesy, and honor of the people was in strange contrast with the primeval face of all things else. Even the people of Texas to-day esteem and hold in fond memory the forces that kept and preserved the good of society in the early days. It was this at the foundation that, more than anything else, has made Texas great to-day.

After one way of looking it seems almost criminal that a man of Denton's talents and force of character should waste his life on the outskirts of civilization. When a man lives for himself alone this is true, but it by no means shows up the ideal man that the world needs. The selfish man is hurt by the things and conditions that turn against him personally, the man of generosity by the things that affect society. Denton belonged to this latter class of men, and was, therefore, a sacrifice on the altar of his country and society.

Now that his course on earth has long been finished, there is remaining something beautiful in the introspection of his day and the manner of life he lived. The rose is more beautiful and fragrant upon the desert wild, where few come and go and taste, than in the city full, where often beauty and fragrance waste. Beautiful

is the flower that dwells and blooms on the desert range, where all passersby make note of its charming presence. Happy the thought that planted it there, tokening beforehand the coming beauty that would spread the desert o'er.

As a Preacher

Having seen the deep impression Denton made upon the society of the early settlers, his helpful ways in saving them from decline in manners and conduct, it would be ungrateful not to speak of him directly and particularly in his ministerial character and ability. The importance of a minister of the gospel to society makes this demand. It is the high office that continually calls upon men to be honorable and upright in all their business and intercourse with their fellows, and as a keynote in human relations, exhorting them to observe the Christ-rule to man: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." And even further, it is the office that calls for faith, repentance, and the soul's preparation for the judgment day; that while man's body is mortal, his soul or spirit will live in consciousness in the hereafter; and that his tran-

scendental life will be morally affected by his conduct in material existence.

With such themes before him, being strong in faith and flushed with deep sympathy for human weakness and all the oppressed, Denton always appeared at his best. Spiritually minded, in close discernment of the eternal realities, of manly form, bewitching eyes, musical voice, and his soul burning with the substance of his subject, he was in the pulpit the unsymbolized orator of his day.

This man, therefore, presented the Gospel not only in the profundity of its truth, but also in the attractiveness of an orator and the rich splendor of language; melting the people into tears, and compelling men and women into repentance through the operation of the Holy Spirit. If converts were limited it was largely because congregations on the frontiers of Texas were likewise limited. Does any one say that this ornateness should not be in the Gospel of Christ? Then let it be said that God has made us all, and has given even to his ministers a feather as various in plumage as the birds of the air. It all works together for the best in the salvation of men. Paul and Barnabas accom-

plished each what the other was unable to do; and one was called Jupiter and the other Mercurius.

That Denton should be provided to labor all his ministerial days among a frontier and thinly scattered people is a problem to which human thought has hardly advanced. It must be allowed that if he had been sent from some educational center he would have been wanting in certain adaptability. With all his ornateness, he was a brother frontiersman. His school was theirs, and his privations. God has not ceased to raise up men for His own purposes. The history of Arkansas and Texas show that Denton was needed; and as a spoke in the wheel of God's moral evolution, he filled his place well, and both these territories were made better by his life.

At this late day it is impossible to realize the importance of such a man to the people of his day. Nor can be fully traced the lines of moral effect beginning with him and still existing. We can only know that which was made by his life, but can never know the conditions that would have been had he never lived. There are secret chambers in the archives of a human

life that cannot be entered, and knowledge there that no man can learn. They belong to that sphere of vision and knowledge that is called supernal.

As a Lawyer

The change that came over Denton in turning to be a lawyer in the third year of this Texas life is not the change that many would reasonably suspect. Ordinarily one would suppose that he had quit the Christian ministry, as has occurred in the history of some preachers. But this is not true in Denton's case except in an excusable part. He was called to a high office from on high. His decision was to occupy this office unto the end and to allow no entanglements to give him trouble in that court.

Yet the whole human race are largely the creatures of circumstances. When these stand around a man in a menacing and threatening manner there are often great moral battles to be fought as well as duties to perform. But in the midst of all a wise and honest man can discern the proper course and will pursue it. No man can know what he will be only as he is called to meet the events. The conditions of to-day may

not be the conditions of to-morrow. But no conditions should brook the man called of God from preaching the Gospel.

To-day the sporting boy may be seen chasing the butterfly. To-morrow butterflies may be gone and he must look around for other sports which another day had furnished. But in the midst of all the dutiful boy is always subject to the call of his mother. A change of conditions did not stop Denton from preaching. He lived a preacher; and when he fell from his saddle at the Keechi battle, he fell not only as a soldier but as a Methodist preacher.

The circumstances under which he became a lawyer are easily told. He was poor, and had around him a growing family that must be cared for, and deserved his fatherly protection. Not that he loved the souls of men and his country less, but because these had been given him as a special charge. The time had been when he could forego demands, for scarcely more than himself would have been in the sacrifice. But when an honorable man has a wife and a growing family of innocents around him, he feels responsibility and looks upon them in a spirit of graciousness more than upon his own body.

Under these conditions Denton only asked for a location in the ministry of the Gospel according to the law and usage of the church to which he belonged. That is, he would not withdraw from the ministry, but would withdraw from the traveling connection. This is the official relation he ever afterwards sustained to the Methodist Episcopal Church until his death.

The circumstances which led him to assume this relation have already been told in part. It was a question of salary or income that would maintain the respectability of his family. To have no other office but that of traveling and preaching is among the most enjoyable things. The young and unembarrassed preacher, in the fervor and glow of his spirit, can do this and enjoy it in the midst of conditions that would put to the test the temper of another, and still go on, for there would be no one financially to be cared for except himself.

But when the day of burden and care comes, when he is oppressed with his load until the additional weight of the grasshopper is felt, other thoughts creep over him, and the duties he owes to his own household will not be over-

looked. This is right; indeed, it is a part of that Gospel which the man preaches. Denton beheld the conditions. He saw that he could not maintain his family in exclusive ministry among a people who were generally poor. He therefore turned his attention to the law as his best opportunity for support. Paul was both a preacher and tent-maker.

Mr. John B. Craig, being somewhat old, did the home office work. Denton was largely in the saddle, often traveling long distances, and did the work over the large field of their practice. We said Denton was in the saddle, because that was the usual way of traveling in those days. It was the usual way except when families were moved, and then it was in wagons or other strong wheel conveyances. Appearances of traveling were all very much the same.

Moreover, men traveling between towns went armed, not knowing at what point or at what hour they would meet with the savage foe. Therefore they had no desire to be embarrassed with vehicles. Again, every frontiersman had to be a "minute-man." His safety and the safety of the settlements depended on his readiness for marching and battle. The preacher

the lawyer, as well as others, were likely to be overtaken by a runner at any hour and informed of an Indian raid and that he was needed.

These conditions are noted, showing the embarrassments that oft intruded upon the pathway of both the preacher and the lawyer in those days. Yet composure and resignation were indwelling qualities of the early settlers. They did not even think their lot was hard. That was the thought of others. They were accustomed to changes, alarms, and battles. They were surprised at few things. Want of valor in any was a thing most surprising of all. When they started anywhere they were not certain they would gain their destination without some kind of check producing delay. For this reason the Gospel was made irregular and courts could not be held with precision of days. While they calculated on the uncertainty of things, they did not nervously bother about them. They thought less about them and said less about them than other people. They simply met the difficulties and made the most of them, leaving their memory to other people who loved to talk about them.

On these outskirts of civilization many a man,

unconscious of being a hero, in the twilight of the evening entered his cabin door and smoked his pipe of peace. With his gun and pouch in readiness he lay down upon his couch and slept in the sound slumbers of a child. He was listless to all the world except certain signs of his foes with which all frontiersmen were well acquainted. The restlessness and unusual neighing of a horse, the peculiar barking of a dog, or the hooting of an owl always awoke him, however sound his slumbers. These and similar signs were the alarm clocks of the pioneers. There might be other sounds greater, but they never disturbed their slumbers; but these always crept into their ears, and to them they were never listless.

The reputation of Denton as a preacher had always gone ahead of him in his law practice. He was frequently called on for a sermon, and his Sundays were occupied in this way. In illustration of his preaching along with his law practice we give the following quotation:

“The next step taken by the pioneers of Grayson County towards civilization was to have preaching whenever they could find a Gospel dispenser straying that way. The first

sermon they had, and the last for several years, was delivered by a Methodist preacher by the name of John B. Denton. He hailed from Arkansas, where he was well known by the Dugan family. After his arrival in Texas he located in Clarksville, occasionally visiting Warren to attend court.

“It was during one of these visits that Mother Dugan heard of his presence and sent him a request to preach while there. He cheerfully complied, and made an appointment for the following Sunday at the school-house at Warren. An event of such importance must have filled the little log school-house to overflowing. What an attractive congregation he must have had, as they listened to the word of God for the first time in the wilderness, and awoke the echoes of the silent forest with their songs of Zion. Would it were my pleasant task to record a long life of usefulness for this good man. But such is not to be. A sacrifice to Indian treachery, his death fully serves as an illustration of their appreciation of a peaceful policy.”—*Indian Depredations in Texas, by Wilbarger.*

This sermon at Warren was preached in 1838, according to the best information received.

There are many stories relating to Denton's career as a preacher, a lawyer, and an orator which must be omitted. The object in writing this biography is a faithful and truthful portrayal of this noted and good man. Things that are at all doubtful, or that test the credulity, are not regarded as worthy. Future generations, through this treatise, should know the man in his true character, and they should not be left to guess at what is true and what is fiction.

Enough of truth remains testifying to Denton's attractiveness of person, his manliness, his art as an orator, his power and grace as a preacher, his success as a lawyer, his self-sacrifice as a Christian, his endurance and courage as a frontiersman, and the deep impression he made on society.

A Sacrifice for his Country

In building a new country and extending civilization where foes are met, it is the history of the world that sacrifices have been offered. In this the innocent have been made to suffer. The world seems not to have been made to dwell and be content in barbarous savagery. The very creation of the "man of reason" as

the topmost stroke of the creative act, whatever may have been his lapses and shortcomings, meant no less than that the earth should be made the best within the range of possibility. If there is a law within him above any other, it is the law of his own development. In the earliest stage of his existence, that whisper in his ear flowing from the divine judgment, telling him to have dominion and subdue the earth, or else it confirmed him in the right to subdue it. He has, therefore, this nature as certainly as that breathing into his nostrils the "breath of life, gave him a living, that is never dying, immortal soul of responsibility."

Hence, it is the nature of man to always subdue the earth and bring everything into captivity and use. To be content with nothing short of carrying the earth forward into the splendor of its destination, to the day of beauty, peace, plenty, and happiness; to the day when the dominion has culminated and the earth lies subdued at the foot of man.

Then will be the beautiful age, when the thought will turn upon the olden history of struggle, battles, carnage, and sacrifice that lay along the pathway, all of which was necessary

to bring the earth into full subjection. In that day the honored dead, who fell for the right, will be named in the anthems of praise sung by those who live in the fruition of halcyon days.

When one looks backward through the historic windows of the present day and scans the history of America, from the landing of the Mayflower unto the present time, he sees, scattered all along, the mounds built over the remains of heroes who fell as sacrifices in the cause of civilization—noble men and women who gave their lives in the cause of subduing the earth and maintaining it on its way toward ultimate peace and happiness.

And then, in more local view, when the eye is turned backward through the historic windows of Texas, from the first rude settlements about old Nacogdoches and along the banks of Sabine River unto the present time, there are seen the names of many a human sacrifice who laid down their lives on the altar of their country that Texas might maintain herself on the road to a higher civilization. All of this seemed necessary, because the foes of progress would not easily give way.

Progress and achievement have always been

costly. But with a nature in man to advance, there has always been, in his heart, the concomitant virtue of sacrifice and martyrdom to every good cause. Every milestone of his progress has received the baptism of human blood. In the blood is the life, and the shedding of it is revolting to the finer sense of man; yet, when is taken into the account that which is accomplished by it, there is something beautiful in contemplating the blood stains of the earth, even as there is something beautiful in the lives of those who freely shed their blood for humanity's sake.

Blood and sacrifice, as with the force of a law, seem to be associated in all things appertaining to man's progress. Whether are considered the things of the earth, or, in higher sense, the things of heaven as related to man, everything of nobility has had its costs to pay in blood. To raise man in moral stature and spiritual development, it was necessary that he should draw upon the blood of heaven. In looking on that blood, man is taught a great lesson of costs. In it he reads the lines of his moral condition, and sees that he has no way of escaping the wreck of his calamity except through

that blood. It was given for him to open the way for higher achievement. In higher sense than the blood of his fellows he should never forget it. It belongs to man's history. It was given for his progress and development. The stained spot at Calvary is the most remarkable on the line of human civilization.

It seems to be a law of the universe that without the shedding of blood there can be not only no remission, but also no uplifting of humanity and no advantages gained. Man should never be forgetful of the blood that has been shed for his progress, whether of Heaven's Son or those of his fellows. They all alike appeal to him and appertain to his history. They all alike were martyrs for his welfare.

Here become visible the two ways that have marked the history and welfare of the human race. They both lie at the foundation of human development. Captain John B. Denton was a traveler on both these ways. On one of these he crucified himself on the cross of human love that mankind might be made better, purer in heart and motive. On this way he labored and strove and shed tears, and did more than shedding his blood for the uplifting of man and

making him a creature on the earth qualified and worthy for exercising his dominion. On the other hand, in carnal warfare, he gave himself a sacrifice to his country. As a traveler on both these ways, he saw the stains of blood on both. He saw that both these ways belong to the history of man, and that the blood stains on both appertain to man's higher civilization and improvement.

There is warfare against man wherever he undertakes to exercise his dominion over the earth and subdue it. He finds that the work of bringing the earth into full subjection is a great task. Labor, sweat, blood, and sacrifice are involved in destroying the earth's face of thorns and thistles and its outer ruggedness, and of planting on its clean face the things of utility and beauty. Even in this righteous work of civilization, the milestones of progress are bespattered with human sweat and blood.

But on the march of civilization the improved man, now and then, meets with the wild children of the desert and the tribes who are content to dwell among thorns and thistles. These hedge the way of progress, and dispute the right to subdue the earth that it may have the beau-

tiful face of art, improvement, and utility. This leaves but two ways of action for the improved man. Either he must retreat before the difficulties and relapse into barbarism, or else he must go forward and subdue the imperfect man, or make him give room for the beauty and comeliness that art gives the earth. But it all means more blood, if the civilized man goes forward. The battle begins, and every mile of advance shows the cost in its red stains.

When man had gone astray to a point, when, if left alone, he would have forever been content with a cave and dens and the entangled forest retreats, or with a forever disordered civilization, the earth was purchased with blood. It was blood through which all tribes and kindreds might reap advantages. John B. Denton understood this. The very thought of it was contained in the Gospel he preached. This, and things like it, bore him up on the tide of his eloquence. It was the sign of blood in the earth's redemption that subdued his own spirit and that made him a calm listener to the words that fell from the skies.

Seeing that Heaven's blood is joined with human history and belongs to it; seeing that

such royal blood as this flowed in behalf of man; and feeling in his own human soul his heirship unto a better day through the power of that blood, Denton saw through it the value even of human blood. Almost bewildered with the thought, and drinking deeply the philosophy of the skies, he saw that his blood was worth more to other people than to himself. He saw what has since been proven true, that if his blood should stain the plains of Texas in the cause of right, it would be gain to humanity and not loss.

Since blood is considered the most sacred and valuable of all things, man needs the stained spots of the earth to which he can refer, showing to his eyes the costs along the pathway that led to his liberty, high privileges, and enjoyments. They instill their own sentiments of patriotism, and make a man feel otherwise than he would feel for his country.

Looking into the life, character, and death of Denton, the human thought and heart naturally turn to the channels of tragedy. The cross is the central object in the Christian religion. The cold, blood-stained body of Cæsar, stretched out in the Roman Forum while Anthony spoke the funeral note, has never been forgotten;

The pierced Lincoln, Garfield, and McKinley will live as three tragedies in American history. The tragic fall of Captain Denton on the plains of Texas, in battle for his country, is most talked of and most remembered among the things of his life. It was the culminating tragedy in his illustrious history with its blood stains. People did not forget it, cannot forget it, because of the blood.

They yet see him, as a youthful general, in his saddle, in his erect, commanding form. They see him when the bullet has struck. They see the blood spot on his coat, and on the grass where he fell and lay. They see the sacrifice for humanity, as he lay cold in death on the plains of Texas. They see him thus, stretched out, with his gun by his side, wrapped in the dress of a battling frontiersman. This was the tragical end of this most noble man. It was in the noon of the day, May 22, 1841.

How often man thinks of that which might have been. He sees the peeping bud of a beautiful flower. He thinks of that which will be. But a bug of destruction or the frost of a night destroys it forever. Then he thinks of that which might have been. Denton was young,

thirty-four years old, seemingly not of age to be fully blown in character and utility, yet he had been a shining light in society for fourteen years. Yet man will speculate on that which might have been.

Not much advanced beyond thy youth
Thou art fallen. Noble man!
Art thou silent now? No. In truth
Thy blood stains speak again.
Texas will not forget, will still speak of thee;
For thou, her son, didst fall to make her free.

How thou didst love all Texas soil;
And made her people thine;
Thine in love, and thine for defense;
Always thine, in cloud or shine!
But thou didst meet her foes, nor didst thou wince.
Alas! thou wast struck hard, and hast gone hence.

It is enough; for Texas knows
Her sons, and what they did.
On scattered mounds her rose still blows
And lights where they are hid.
Quiescat pace. Ye were heroes all,
And in the evil day were *Lone Star's* wall.

Appendix

In writing this brief biography of a most noble Texan, we have had to deal largely with legendary stories and the memory of people. Many things very sacred and important in the life of Captain Denton were never written and published, for causes already noticed in other chapters. A much more abundant history could have been written if the times of his life had been more favorable for keeping the full records of events. Human memory, through the lapse of almost three-quarters of a century, will naturally grow a little inconsistent in certain details. In many things of recent date, the testimony of eye-witnesses is oftentimes not in full accord. But it must be stated that, touching the main points of Denton's life, there is harmony among all who have spoken.

In summing up the whole matter, overhauling the many letters we have received, and addressing ourselves to the numerous newspaper clippings we have in hand, we have endeavored to delineate the true life of Captain Denton faith-

fully, to place him and his times before the public as they really were. Yet we have thought it best to reserve certain matters for this appendix, not that they are of less importance, but because they better serve the arrangement.

The following appeared in the Dallas News of October 6, 1900. It is the account rendered by Rev. Andrew Davis. He was only thirteen years of age at the time, but was a member of those in the Keechi battle.

Story of the Fight and Denton's Death

[Special to the News]

WAXAHACHIE, TEX., Oct. 6.

Rev. Andrew Davis, of this city, was a member of the company commanded by General Tarrant at the fight with the Indians in which Captain John B. Denton was killed, and an eye-witness of his death and burial. He was, at the time, but thirteen years of age, and in all probability is the only survivor of that heroic band of pioneers. Since the discussion anent the death and burial of Captain Denton, Mr. Davis has received a great many letters urging him to write a full history of the fight and the circumstances connected with the killing and

burial of Captain Denton for publication, and in compliance with those letters he to-day handed the News correspondent the following article:

In the spring of 1841 the campaign was made in which John B. Denton was killed. The company was made up by General Tarrant, a lawyer, who, at that time, lived in Bowie County. He finally moved to Ellis County, where he died. There were many of the most prominent men of north Texas in this company, some of whom were Colonel Coffee, James Bourland, William Bourland, Mac Bourland, Colonel Porter, Henry Stout, Dick Hopkins, John B. Denton, Clabe Chisum, J. L. Lovejoy, Colonel Bill Young, Captain Yeary. These are sufficient. Many of their names have faded out of my memory.

It would not be proper for me to attempt a history of the whole campaign, but to fix attention directly upon the occasion of the killing of J. B. Denton and the circumstances connected with it.

Denton was killed (as I might say) on our return home. On the day before the taking of the village, a lone Indian was discovered. General Tarrant divided the company, and ordered them to cut him off from timber and to capture

him. This was nicely and quickly done. The capture of the Indian occurred on the high prairie some ten miles west of the village, at a point not far from where Ft. Worth is located. Tarrant left the prairie and went into a secluded place on the river. There we remained all night. About sunset every preparation was made to kill our prisoner. He was placed upon an elevated spot a few paces from the company. He was then placed with his back against an elm-tree, his hands were drawn around the tree and made secure, and his feet were then tied together and secured to the tree. Then twelve men, with their guns, were ordered to take their position before the Indian. The scene was an awful one in its solemnity, to me and to all. The men were ordered to present arms. At this moment the alarmed and terror-stricken Indian became greatly excited, and in great agony of spirit he cried aloud, "Oh, man! Oh, man!" While he did not utter the above words with distinctness, yet it was more like these words than any other. General Tarrant sent Captain Yeary with an interpreter to the prisoner to see if he would reveal anything, for prior to this he had been sullen, and would not say a word. He

was made to understand that if he would tell where the village was, and how to find it, he should not be hurt, and he made a full revelation of the whole matter, and closed by saying, "We be friends." He was untied, but kept under guard all night. After dark Tarrant sent ten men under Henry Stout, who was ordered to go to the village, reconnoitre the same, and select the point of attack, and report by four o'clock in the morning. This was done, and by daylight all were in motion, under the guidance of our trusty pilot, for the village, which was reached about nine o'clock in the morning.

General Tarrant Led the Attack and the Indians were Routed

From our position we could see the Indians passing about in every direction. We were ordered to deposit our baggage and free ourselves of every incumbrance, and be ready for the charge in five minutes. When the time was out, General Tarrant said, "Are you all ready?" The response was in the affirmative. Then Tarrant, in a low, yet a clear, distinct voice, said: "Now, my brave men, we will never all meet on earth again; there is great confusion and death

ahead. I shall expect every man to fill his place and do his duty."

The command to charge was given. A level prairie, about three hundred yards wide, lay between the command and the first huts. This distance was measured off in less than half the time I am in telling it. In a moment the sound of firearms, with a voice of thunder, rang out over the alarmed and terror-stricken inhabitants of that rude city of the wilderness. Tarrant and James Bourland, with Denton, led the charge, while every other man followed with the best speed his horse could make. I was riding a mule, furnished me by Aunt Gordon. (God bless her memory!) She was my friend in orphanage and helplessness—well, pardon the digression. That mule was a mule, and, just like its kind, it was slow, and made me among the last to reach the enemy. As I passed the first huts, I saw to my right a number of Indians. I fired into the crowd with the best aim my excited nerves would allow. In a moment our men came upon them from a different direction, and for a short time the work of death was fearful. It was here that my mule was shot from under me. I felt like I had lost

my best friend. The air was full of bullets, and I took a tree. In a moment, however, I saw a number of our men on foot, some of them from choice, and others, like myself, because they could not help it. I left my tree and joined them. In less than an hour the village was cleared of Indians, and it seemed like the work of death was done.

Covered with dust and dirt and wet with sweat and almost famished, both for food and water, Tarrant called the company together at a little spring. On roll-call it was found that not a man had been killed; a dozen, perhaps, had been unhorsed. Quite a number were hatless. As many as eight or ten were slightly wounded, but none in a painful manner. Many had made narrow escapes from death, as their rent clothes abundantly testified. Tarrant commended the men for their good behavior, and said, "Thank God, we are all here. You have had water, repair to the nearest huts and get your hands full of dried buffalo meat, and in fifteen minutes be ready for further advance."

My, my! how the buffalo meat was used up by those hungry men! At the expiration of the fifteen minutes, Tarrant called the men together

and ordered John B. Denton and Henry Stout each to take a squad of twenty men and pursue the retreating Indians, as a great number of them had fled north into the Trinity bottom by two paths leading out of the village.

It so happened that I fell into the squad of men commanded by Captain Henry Stout, who took the trail which led from the northeastern portion of the village. John B. Denton, with his men, took the trail which led from the northwestern part of the village. Within about sixty yards of the river the trails came together. When Captain Stout came to this point he halted, and addressed his men: "Here the trail from the west unites with ours; a great many Indians have gone out on both trails. From the large cottonwoods in view, we are near the river. I think it is imprudent for a little squad of men to enter into such a trap, for if the Indians make a stand at all, it will be at the river."

Just at this time some one said, "I hear the sound of horses' feet."

Captain Stout said, "That is Denton. We will wait till he comes, and we will consult."

When Captain Denton came up he said, "Captain, why have you stopped?"

Stout repeated to Captain Denton what he had just said to his men, but he added, "I am willing to go as far as any other man."

Instantly, and without a word, Captain Denton spurred his horse on in the path. Captain Stout followed, and their men dropped into line, and the little company, in death-like silence, moved on toward the river. We found no prepared ford, but merely a well-worn buffalo trail, which led down into the river, and went out some eighty yards below. The north bank of the river was high, and covered with a closely set undergrowth of brush. Here the Indians had secreted themselves. When the company reached the point opposite and under the Indians, they opened a deadly fire upon us, it being mainly directed on our men in the front. Captain Denton was instantly killed, and Captain Stout had his arm broken. In this condition of affairs no word of command was given. The scene of death and the moment of suspense was awful to endure. Captain Yeary halloed at the top of his voice, "Why in the h—I don't you move your men out to where we can see the enemy? We will all be killed here."

The men began at once a kind of irregular

retreat, and Captain Stout had so far recovered from his shock as to be able to say: "Men, do the best you can for yourselves. I am wounded and powerless."

About this time some one exclaimed, "Captain Denton is killed." The shot was so deadly that there was no death struggle. He had balanced himself in his saddle, raised his gun, and closed one eye, intending to deal death upon the enemy, when the death shock struck him. When his death was discovered, his muscles were gradually relaxing, and his gun, yet in his hand, was inclining to the ground. The men nearest to him took him from his horse and laid him on the ground, and then we returned to the command at the village. We feared that after we left the Indians would scalp Captain Denton and otherwise mutilate his body, but this was not done. A squad of men were sent back to the river to bring Denton's body, which was done. I am glad to this day that I am one of the number to volunteer to go back, and, if need be, to brave death to recover the body of Captain Denton.

About 4 or 4:30 P. M., the body of Captain Denton was securely tied upon a gentle horse,

and the command moved out from the village, with some eighty head of horses and fifteen or twenty head of cattle taken from the village. We moved up the river to a point not far from Ft. Worth, and there spent the night. Early next morning we crossed the river at a place where the timber was narrow. After crossing the river, we traveled in the direction of Bird's Station, aiming for Bonham, as our objective point. At about 11 A. M. we halted on a prairie on the south side of a creek, with a high bank on the north. On one of these elevations Captain Denton was buried. I have never, for a moment, doubted but that I could find the identical spot. The tools with which his grave was dug were brought from the village, and they were ample for the purpose. If, therefore, any person has found a shallow grave, and is of the impression that it is the grave of Captain Denton, he is mistaken. His grave was dug a good depth. A thin rock was cut so as to fit in the bottom of the grave, similar rocks were placed at the sides, and also at the head and foot. Another rock was placed over the body, and the grave filled up.

Thus was buried one of God's noble men.

We here give the following quotation, comparing which with well authenticated data in hand, it must be inaccurate in several points:

“When the Indians again commenced their depredations, Denton was among the foremost to go wherever the call for help was heard, and to assist in any movement for the benefit of the settlers. A raid had been made and a number of horses driven off by the Indians, and Denton, with a party of men, started on their trail to try and recover the stock. When near the crossing of a creek, in what is now called Denton County, he called a halt, and pointing to the bushes and brush near the crossing ahead of them, remarked that he did not think it safe to ride through there, as the Indians might be lying in ambush to surprise them, and advised turning back a short distance and scouting around. Some of the men in the party were of the same opinion, and thought that the safest plan; but one objected, didn’t see any danger, and intimated that Denton was afraid, and wanted to turn back. Not fancying this unmerited attack upon his bravery, Denton said that he would go as far as any man, and started on ahead, the others following.

“When they had approached the crossing, and were all opposite the bushes, the Indians raised from where they had been crouching, and, watching every movement, fired upon them, singling out Denton as their leader. The whole party turned and retreated in great haste, to find, when they halted at a safe distance, that Denton’s riderless horse was with them. Unknown to his companions, he had been mortally wounded, and had fallen off his horse in the retreat. The man who told of the affair afterwards said: ‘When Denton wheeled his horse around to retreat, he looked at me with a smile on his face, and an expression which seemed to say, What did I tell you? Hardly realizing that he was shot, as he turned with them, they returned to rescue him if it were possible that he had been thrown.

“They found his dead body where it had fallen off in the brush by the side of the trail, and not far from where he had been shot. Strange to relate, the Indians had not disturbed him, probably not knowing that they had killed any one. His friends carried him to a secluded spot away from the trail, wrapped him in a blanket, and buried him. His grave they dug

with their hatchets and knives, and lined with slabs of slate rock; then they laid him tenderly in, covering him with another slab, and filled up the grave, carefully smoothing it level, and scattering leaves over it, that the Indians might not find and disturb his last resting-place.

“So perished one of Texas’ bravest and best pioneers. A fine orator, far above the average in intelligence, and, had he lived, would have proved a blessing to his country and assisted materially in its advancement.”

“The pioneer was laid to rest,
The red man set him free,
Disturb him not, but let him sleep
Beneath the old oak-tree.”

—*Indian Depredations in Texas*—J. W. Wilbarger.

Rev. J. F. Denton, the oldest son, now living in Weatherford, Texas, among other things in answer to the author’s inquiries, says:

“If you will pardon what might look like egotism, I will say that my father was a man of immense, almost tireless, energy. While he had no educational advantages in his early life, he was considered by his friends as fairly well educated. He had the finest library in the town of Clarksville at the time of his death. He was familiar with the English authors—

Shakespeare, Milton, Byron, Pollock, and a number of others. This is my information from reliable sources.

“Rev. John B. Craig, his old law partner, told me that when my father studied a case he usually exhausted it, so far as his side was concerned, before it was taken before a jury. Hon. Thos. J. Rusk said of him: ‘That as a natural orator of that day, John B. Denton was fully the equal of any man he had ever heard.’”

Rev. John B. Denton, Jr., wrote the author from Shannon, Texas, October 8, 1900, among other things, the following:

“I know but little of my father’s life and history except what I have been told by older brothers and sisters, and by the friends of my father. Having had a desire to know something of my father, with these I talked much in my boyhood. I was told that he, with an older brother, was bound to a man by the name of Wells, who was a Methodist local preacher and a blacksmith; that, owing to the unbearable scolding of Wells’s wife my father ran away, and that he worked on a flatboat on the Arkansas River. He was married and converted in his eighteenth year, I think. He was licensed to

preach, and admitted on trial in the Missouri conference not many months afterward. My mother taught him to read after they were married. But he soon became distinguished as a preacher of almost superhuman eloquence. I have known a number of able and highly educated men who told me that they regarded him as the greatest orator they had ever heard.

“He came to Texas in 1836, in the month of December, and crossed Red River in company with Lyttleton Fowler, who came, like himself, as a missionary to the almost wilderness. He traveled two years as a missionary, and then felt compelled to locate, because of inadequate support for his family. He began the study of law, and in six months was licensed to practice. He entered into partnership with John B. Craig, who was another Methodist preacher. He soon took front rank as one of the most eloquent lawyers in the Republic.

“He was commissioned by the government as captain, and served under Colonel William Young. I do not know the date of his commission. He was killed on Village Creek, in what is known as Tarrant County, about six miles east of Ft. Worth. I was then

just fourteen months and four days old. I am the youngest son. I feel the deepest gratitude to the Old Settlers of Denton County for the interest they are taking and the efforts they are making to honor my father's memory."

William C. Baker married the oldest daughter of Captain John B. Denton. In answer to inquiries he wrote the author the following from Durant, I. T., in the year 1900:

His father moved to Clark County, Arkansas, when John B. was quite a small boy. Soon thereafter losing his wife, he bound his two sons, William and John, to a Colonel Wells, who was a blacksmith, to learn the trade. William, who was several years the oldest, went to work and learned the trade. John B., being too young to put at the forge, was taken charge of by Mrs. Wells, and put at all sorts of menial labor, such as carding, spinning, milking the cows, and doing housework generally.

At quite an early age he showed a strong desire to learn his letters, which he learned at odd spells, as he could catch time between his jobs of housework. He was anxious to learn to read, but was denied the use of a tallow candle to study by. He resorted to pine knots

as a substitute to study by, of which there was no scarcity.

At about twelve years of age he discovered his miserable condition, and left his oppressor and wrought for himself.

At the age of eighteen years he married a Miss Mary Greenlee Stewart of Louisiana. She was sixteen years of age. She taught him to write his name. They became members of the M. E. Church, and not long afterwards he was licensed to preach. He became a traveling preacher in the Little Rock Conference. In a short time he distinguished himself as an orator of the highest type.

The author received the following from Mrs. S. J. Wilson, of Clarksville, Texas. The letter was dated September 16, 1900:

I knew John B. Denton as an intelligent minister, and I know of his death and burial through two uncles of mine who were with him when he was killed, Colonel Sam Sims, who now lives with his daughter, Mrs. W. H. Allen, at Rich Hill, Missouri, now eighty-three years old, and Mr. John Griffin, now dead.

I will now relate to you the sad story, as I well remember it being told by my uncles, his

companions, when killed. About an hour after the battle of Keechi Village, Captain Henry Stout, John B. Denton, and John F. Griffin mounted to explore a ravine near by. Captain Stout, in the advance, was shot through the arm; John B. Denton was shot through the breast and instantly killed; and John Griffin was shot through the right cheek.

They placed the body of Denton on a horse, left the village, and came until they crossed Denton Creek, and there they buried him, on the east side. They cut his name on a tree at the head of his grave. They placed two large stones on the grave with the hope of concealing it from the Indians.

Doctor Homer S. Thrall, in his *Brief History of Methodism in Texas*, on page twenty-one, says:

“John B. Denton was a man of extraordinary ability. Left an orphan in his childhood, he had comparatively no advantages of early education, nor did he exhibit his extraordinary genius until after his conversion. His earliest efforts at exhorting and preaching elicited the wonder and admiration of his hearers, and vast multitudes flocked to his appointments.

“He entered the Missouri Conference in 1836, but a meager support for his growing family compelled him to resort to other means of obtaining a livelihood, and he studied law. Having been prosperous and successful in this profession, he again entered the itinerancy, and was sent to Texas. On his way to his new field of labor, he fell in company with Rev. Lyttleton Fowler, just appointed to the Texas Mission, and the two crossed Red River together. Mr. Fowler preached his first sermon in Texas at the house of Rev. William Duke.

“Mr. Denton was killed by the Indians in 1839. Denton County perpetuates his name. Two of his sons became itinerant preachers—J. F. and John B. Denton, now of the West Texas Conference. Another son, Dr. A. N. Denton, was, in 1883, appointed superintendent of the lunatic asylum, and now resides at Austin.”—*Brief History of Methodism in Texas*.

Mr. Thrall must be in error in a few points. Mr. Denton was certainly a traveling preacher before 1836. It appears from certain other evidence that 1826 is nearer the time of fixing the beginning of his itinerancy. In those early days of frontier work records were not well kept, and

much of that which was once written has been lost. It is very evident that Mr. Thrall is mistaken when he says that Denton was killed in 1839. But we will let him correct himself. In *Methodism in Texas*, on page seventy-four, he says:

“In 1841 a party of Texans, under General Tarrant, destroyed an Indian village on Trinity River, above where Dallas now stands. John B. Denton, in command of one of his companies, was killed, and buried on a creek which bears his name.”

Where Mr. Thrall here says “above where Dallas now stands,” should be “six miles east of where Ft. Worth now stands.” For that is Village Creek, where the Indian village was, and the natural scene of the Keechi battle.

Conclusion

The author of this biographical tribute to Captain John B. Denton has, himself, had no small experience in frontier life. This more than anything else qualified him for this service. Through this experience he could better see how to read between the lines and perceive the facts where things had been, in some degree, forgotten. In his boyhood he had read of Goliad, the Alamo, and San Jacinto; of Fannin, Travis, and Houston; of numerous men, and some women, who were famous in the early history of Texas, and through whose labors and sacrifices the foundations of a great country had been laid. He was in love with Texas for the honor and heroism of her pioneer settlers, and for the victory of her small but heroic army.

It was the fascinating charm that Texas wrought in his youth that induced him to leave the most pleasant surroundings of a Kentucky home, and go West. It was Texas above every other place. With boyish thought, he wanted to be a Texan; he wanted to set his foot on the

land of heroism, and in whatever way he could, be a participator in further civilization.

Hence, he became a Texan, and has been a Texan for fifty years. He knows something of frontier life, of Indian raids, of privation, of that fortitude and courage necessary to remain and battle as a frontiersman. Now that it is past, and the face of all things have changed, he is glad that he has so long been a Texan. Yet it looks like the work of magic. Coming to Texas when there was a population scarcely exceeding two hundred thousand, and now between three and four millions; when the vote for governor was scarcely fifty thousand, and now more than half a million; when there were no railroads, and now more than eleven thousand miles; when the head of water navigation was Buffalo Bayou in southern Texas and Shreveport on Red River, Louisiana, and now canalizing Trinity River to Dallas.

It is a pleasant reflection now to have become a Texan as early as nineteen years after the battle of San Jacinto and fourteen years after Captain Denton was killed, whose biography is herein contained. Few things are more delightful than for one who has been in

the midst of it to contemplate the material evolution of Texas for the last fifty years. When is added to this the battle that has been made for education, morality, and religion, in all of which Captain Denton, in earlier day, was an earnest participator, things are seen in purer light, and the contemplation grows more delightful by the very loveliness of things.

There is something beautiful in the race for material development, although those most earnestly engaged in the task seem to take little time to think of other things just as important to make Texas truly great. Then comes in that other beautiful thing. It is the thought and struggle of keeping intelligence, morality, and spiritual culture of the people on a parity, and, if possible, in advance of material development. A manly battle has been made in this way. In earlier day Captain Denton and his associates in the Christian ministry, and since their day others of like calling, have kept their arms of love around useful but forgetful men. This ointment has unceasingly been poured on the race-course of progression, and is a mighty factor in maintaining the true greatness of Texas.

Honor is due to every man, in his proper place,

who has from the earliest day till now labored for the material and moral welfare and greatness of Texas. But too much cannot be said in praise of those pioneer men and women of the earlier days. May such men as Captain John B. Denton be multiplied in Texas and all the earth. While we know not what would have been had he not been killed in young manhood, of one thing we are well assured, that both the time he did live and his tragic death made a deep impression on Texas society.

Who knows the best? Only one, that is God;
He knows best when to give, and when to take.

He knows it all.

He places all beneath His chastening rod,
He watches men, and marks the time and place,
Where'er they fall.

Who knows the best? Can others speak and say?
Knows any one a new or better way
That satisfies?

Then why speculate, or make search to find
Other thought or proof among all mankind
Than from the skies?

Denton fought, bled, and died while he was young.
Garlands of fame around him still have clung,
And still will cling.

He is an anthem on the lips and heart,
A song engraved, and which will never part
From souls that sing.

Names of some of the men who were with Denton in the Keechi battle: E. J. Tarrant, Sam Sims, Daniel Montague, James Bourland, Andrew Davis, John L. Lovejoy, Clabe Chisum, John Griffin, Henry Stout, Colonel Coffee, William Bourland, Mac Bourland, Colonel Porter, Dick Hopkins, Colonel William C. Young, Captain Yeary.

The Battle of San Jacinto

Since many besides Captain John B. Denton have fallen in the cause of Texas, and since the battle of San Jacinto was historically decisive, that is, the turning event that ultimately secured for Texas her national independence, it is thought that it will be a fitting close to this little volume to give a description of this battle, together with a narration of certain conditions of Texas and her army at the time.

“The enemy are laughing you to scorn. You must fight them. You must retreat no further. The salvation of the country depends on your doing so.” General Houston received these laconic orders from David G. Burnet, president of Texas, only a few days before the battle. They were issued from Harrisburg, which was near by San Jacinto battle-field, and were borne to General Houston by General Thomas J. Rusk, secretary of war.

Things were done sharply in this extreme hour of Texas, even as those curtly expressed orders do suggest. They uncover a chapter of

conditions, and give an insight of danger, showing that something must be done, and be done quickly. Whatever may have been the choice of General Houston up to this hour, whatever may have been his former hesitation, he now resolved to give battle, whatever the consequences. The orders were imperative.

To say that this was not a serious hour in Texas is to speak the contrary of all truth in the matter. But, with Houston's little army, it was more a feeling of responsibility than of seriousness. They were largely a class of cultured men, of purest patriotism, and were, therefore, capable of being deeply touched with feelings of individual responsibility. They well knew that they occupied the contesting battling ground between Texas independence and Mexican domination. They knew that all eyes were turned toward them for safety and future happiness. They knew that if they were successful the seriousness and shadows would be removed from the country. But if they failed, dark shadows would cover the land, and that seriousness would be so intensified that the very foundation of hope itself would be shaken. It was fortunate, in this perilous hour, that the men

composing the Texas army were so cultured that they could individually feel the responsibility which was due to Texas in such extreme conditions.

It is proper to state here that Texas only a month ago had declared her independence, and only a month ago had elected her first president. At that hour it was not known but that all was going well at the Alamo, and that Colonel Fannin and his men were in unembarrassed safety. But even before the day of the Declaration of Independence had gone, a courier brought the sad news of the fall of the Alamo. Nothing good came. It was one tale of disaster following another which, it seemed, never would end; and in the midst, which almost broke the hearts of men and women, the news came of the battle of Colita, the surrender of Colonel Fannin and his men, and their massacre at Goliad. Texas independence seemed to be making a bad start. In almost every aspect it appeared as flimsy as the sheet of parchment on which it was written.

The people, for some weeks, had been fleeing before the victorious and treacherous Mexicans. The country between San Antonio and the vicinity of San Jacinto had been laid waste by

the Mexican army. Not only was the provender of the country taken, but the towns were burned. Even President Burnet, in the short month of his presidency, had changed the seat of government several times for safety. Even now, in addition to the care of government, he was seeking the safety of his own family.

There was much confusion, and anxiety burned like a consuming fire in every soul. The government itself, so to speak, was in the saddle, and was threatened with absolute dissolution through fading hope. It was the crisis hour, and in it was beginning the crucial pain that precedes the death. Further retreat would lead to uncontrollable demoralization. It would be a shock worse than a lost battle. President Burnet knew this when he wrote his orders for battle and sent them to General Houston. Houston himself must have known it. Texas independence, as if suspended by a hair, was hanging in the balance. Declared scarcely a month ago, it was like a babe in the cradle struggling to loose itself from its swaddling.

Perhaps few such crises have occurred in the world's history. Prepared or unprepared, to fight a battle at this hour was necessary. It

was to make battle only in hope with the odds against. Calculating advantages and disadvantages could not enter in as a consideration. To fight and lose the battle would not delay Texas independence should such ever be the march of events. To fight and get the victory would send the Mexican army back to the Rio Grande. Confidence would be restored. A new spirit would seize the people. Santa Anna would never be allowed to gain another such advantage over Texas. President Burnet saw all this. General Houston must have seen it. All Texas seemed to perceive it.

It seems that it was necessary that Houston should have been chided by the president and urged to battle. He did not chafe under the orders, but acted as though the orders were but a statement of the very thing he was about to do. However the matter of his own mind stood, he was left without choice. Yet the die for battle was cast not simply by the president's orders, but also by one of those mysterious and inexplicable pulses of nature that pervades all and molds all into one common thought and judgment. Houston knew that Texas was about exhausted of men who could bear arms, and

that he could not ever hope to have a more efficient army. Pervaded with the idea of immediate battle, he sought no excuse. He had no desire to make excuse, to parley, or to delay, but immediately began arrangements and preparation to meet the enemy. The secretary of war who bore to him the president's orders remained in camp and was of service in the field.

Yet in the midst of all these things the commander of the Texas army was far from believing that he was leading a forlorn hope. There were conditions that gave him encouragement. He knew that through the over-confidence of Santa Anna and his accordant carelessness he had caught the Mexican army in detail, and that the Mexican general was in nowise expecting a stubborn resistance in an open field. He knew that Santa Anna was of opinion that the revolution was already crushed except in a few small details, and that he was thinking of going home and leaving the work to be finished by his generals. Houston also knew the spirit of revenge that rankled in the hearts of his own little army; that they remembered their friends and kinsmen that had been murdered at Goliad;

that they remembered the black flag of the Alamo. He knew that his men would fight like demons, and, under the conditions, had rather die than lose the victory. He knew that numbers do not count like the spirits of men in battle, and that when the spirit of his army should be revealed to the enemy it would produce demoralization in their ranks.

Santa Anna, on the other hand, had invaded Texas with an army, or armies, equal to almost one-fourth of the population. He held strenuously that Texas was a province of Mexico and that his cause was just before God and in the eyes of all the Roman Catholic world. He was fresh from the Alamo and its slaughter, fresh from the victory of Colita and the murder of Colonel Fannin and his men at Goliad. He was on his eastward march to Nacogdoches in three divisions of his army, to put down every vestige of revolution. He marched both as a general and autocrat whose word was the only authority. Having long been accustomed to scenes of blood, he had grown cold and indifferent in his feeling. As anomalously as it may be expressed, he was a man conscientious but without a conscience. His ambition had driven

a nail through his soul that paralyzed his better nature.

The Mexican general was certainly in a fair way to put down all traces of armed revolution. Everything was going easy his way; so much so, that his march from San Antonio to the vicinity of San Jacinto, a road of two hundred miles, was without resistance. It was not until he had arrived in this vicinity that he discovered a show of resistance against his authority. But he was very confident; so much so, that about this time he sent a negro messenger to General Houston, saying: "I know where you are, and when I clear the thieves from around Harrisburg I am coming to smoke you out." The words "thieves" and "smoke" symbolized his mode of treating the revolution. It was to murder and burn. President Burnet had just been driven from Harrisburg, which was in the vicinity of San Jacinto battle-field.

It is called the battle of San Jacinto. But the ground selected for the battle, or rather that on which the opposing armies met, was a plat of ground near the head and bordering on San Jacinto Bay, and on the right or westward bank; a point near where San Jacinto River

and Buffalo Bayou join together to form the bay. Lynchburg was near to it, but across the bay. The plat of ground on which Houston City has since been located and built is near by and northwestward.

Here the two armies encamped facing each other at least an evening and a morning. It was an even country with only two or three motts of trees intervening. Being thus only partially screened, it was an easy matter to watch each other's movements and to make estimate of numbers. Thus they rested, waited, and watched each other for an evening and a morning before the battle was joined. It was a delay in which either was free to take the initiative. Santa Anna showed no disposition to advance, but began to fortify his left wing. He was awaiting reinforcements. By the day of the battle he did receive five hundred under General Cos.

By three o'clock on the evening of the 21st of April General Houston had made all his arrangements for battle. The enemy numbered above fifteen hundred, his own army seven hundred and eighty-three men. Colonel Sidney Sherman was assigned to the left wing and Colonel Ed Burleson to the center. The

two six-pounders, in charge of Colonel George W. Hockley, were on the right wing, supported by four companies of infantry commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Millard. The sixty-one cavalry, under Colonel Mirabeau B. Lamar, were placed on the right wing.

It all looks small, very small; but small as it was, an empire state hung in the balance. Victory would bring joy and laughter to the Texans, and mourning for those who should fall would be swallowed up in thoughts of valor and heroism. A Spartan spirit had seized the men, women, and children of the land. Small as everything seemed, it was a gathered tempest that had hesitated an evening and a morning, but was now making its first motions to swoop down on Santa Anna and his army. The revenge of the Alamo and Goliad was in it. The spirits of Fannin, Travis, Crockett, and Bowie gave it strength. But Santa Anna, as president of Mexico, stands guard over his empire of states and provinces. He is on the ground, a general of no mean ability, and is determined to withstand the approaching tempest and save the integrity of his empire. He is unwilling that seven hundred and eighty-

three men should snatch out of his empire such a jewel as Texas. He speaks words of encouragement to his soldiers. He tells them to defeat this handful of Texans and the revolution will be ended.

But it is now too late for ceremony of any kind, almost too late for giving and hearing orders. The battle is on. Already Sherman has struck the Mexican right wing, which was projected furthest to the front. In quick succession Burleson is at the center. Hockley has charged within two hundred yards of the left wing and is pouring a stream of grape and canister into the wavering lines of the enemy. The whole line of the Texan army continually advances, and above the din of battle the Mexicans hear the wild battle cry of revenge from every Texan throat: "Remember the Alamo! Remember Goliad!" In less time than it is told confusion reigned throughout the Mexican army, and they fled, every man for himself, throwing away their arms, in the panic of broken organization never to be rallied again.

The pursuit continued to the end of physical endurance. But on account of the speed of battle physical endurance was more limited.

It was a day of revenge. Not much quarter was shown until the Texans began to feel that they had fully avenged the blood of their brethren who fell at the Alamo and at Goliad. They felt that they were entitled to the revenge of an hour. Then the better spirit of civilization took hold of them, and with sympathy and tenderness they administered to their wounded and suffering foes. The battle was a dreadful charge into the Mexican line of battle in all its parts. It came upon them so unexpectedly, in such a demon outcry, and in such an avalanche style, that, instead of fighting and contending for the inches of ground in retreat, they fell down and begged for mercy. The resounding cry of the Texans, "Remember the Alamo and Goliad" chilled their blood and paralyzed their hands. They were ignorant and largely innocent. The bloody deeds they had formerly committed on the Texans was chargeable to Santa Anna and his officers.

Even down to this day no pen has ever been able to describe the battle of San Jacinto in its accurate fullness. Those who were there have ever been unequal to the task. They were all

actors, each one busy for himself, and therefore they were all unqualified to give a description except in a small part. General Houston himself made a report of the battle. It was satisfactory as a report, but it was not a description. Every man on the ground was an actor. The time yet awaits some unborn Dante whose mind had been trained to look into the romance of the dreadful and terrible to tell what this battle was. Such a one might weave a satisfying descriptive web of the burning thought, the stubborn will, the unconquerable determination, the revengeful heart, and the love of Texas that pervaded Houston's little army. And then he might add descriptions of scenes that correspond in the battle to conquer or die.

There is a vast difference between an army of men who run to meet the enemy as a trained soldiery, and that other class of army whose hearts burn with revenge, and who run to meet the foe to die or have the victory. This latter class of army represents the charge that was made at the battle of San Jacinto. Whoever shall first gain a right conception of such an army and such a charge as they made, may write

a satisfying description of the battle of San Jacinto, but till then the world must remain awaiting.

Very few of the Mexicans escaped. It almost looks strange that so few got away. It can be attributed largely to the dreadful fear that seized them under the demon-like war-cry and charge made by the Texan army. In their fear and confusion the Mexicans sought hiding-places more than means of escape. Hence for two days after the battle they were brought into Houston's camp out of their hiding-places. On the day after the battle Santa Anna was found, disguised as a common soldier, hidden in the tall grass. A cavalryman took him up behind him and brought him into camp not knowing the royalty of his prisoner. All were astonished when the Mexican prisoners cried out, "*El Presidente.*" It was Santa Anna.

In this battle the Texans lost in killed and mortally wounded, 8; in wounded otherwise, 17. The enemy lost 630 killed; wounded, 208; prisoners, 730. As an evidence that the Mexican officers tried to do their duty, there were killed, one general officer, four colonels,

two lieutenant colonels, five captains, and twelve lieutenants, and about as many wounded. Six hundred muskets, 300 sabers, and 200 pistols were taken. Many were never found. Mules, horses, and wagons were taken, and twelve thousand dollars in specie.

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